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COMICS BUYER'S GUIDE®

NOVEMBER 14, 2003 #1565

THE ATOM'S TIME-TRAVEL ADVENTURES

The Tiny Titan took several dips in the time pool? Ask Mr. Silver Age, Page 28

We must not roast anybody alive!

Ross, Dini, and Kidd to sign at Lee's Comics

Lee Hester of Lee's Comics in Mountain View, Calif., is bringing three of comics' top talents together when Alex Ross, Chip Kidd, and Paul Dini converge on his store for a signing Nov. 15.

The three will promote their new books: *Justice League: Liberty and Justice* by Ross and Dini and *Mythology: The DC Comics Art of Alex Ross* designed by Chip Kidd. ✦

There's more on **Page 14!**

THE A LIST

The Life Eaters

Sandman: Endless Nights

Patrick the Wolf Boy Wedding Special

World's Best Comics: Golden Age Sampler

Review section, page 20

CURRENT COMICS

Pay a visit to Diamond International Galleries!

Read all about it on page 16; Current Comics news coverage begins on page 12

BACK ISSUES

Get all shook up with Archie's pal, Jughead!

Read all about it on page 26; Dear Captain, Page 34

THE GUIDE

Alan Giroux discovers large Silver and Bronze Age collection!

Read all about it on Page 38; Tales from the Database, page 46

What's shipping this week? Page 13

Visit www.collect.com/comics

CROSSGEN GOES AHEAD WITH 2004 PLANS

cover story

END OF SERIES BRINGS NEW REALITY-BASED TITLES

By **Nate Melby**

Much has changed at CrossGen Comics in the past couple of months, but according to newly promoted CrossGen Senior Vice President of Publishing Bill Rosemann, the company is focusing on its successes and looking forward to 2004.

"Moving forward into 2004, we're learning from — and building on — our successes," Rosemann told ***CBG***. "While some readers enjoy reading several entwined series, others prefer unique and distinct standalone adventure comics. With *El Cazador* flying off shelves and positive buzz building around *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang*, we'll continue to ask our creators what new stories they've been burning to tell, while continuing to support our strongest titles, such as *Sojourn* and *Lady Death*. Our size may have changed, but the mission of creating fantastic stories remains."

Even, though the company will cancel nine titles in February, there are no plans for CrossGen to stop publishing as was originally speculated when the company was forced to recently lay off some of its staff.

Rosemann assured readers that even though they might lose some of their favorite titles that does not necessarily mean that they will lose their favorite characters.

There's more on **Page 12!**

CrossGen ENTERTAINMENT

This issue was shipped October 27

COMICS BUYER'S GUIDE'S CGC INDEX

For complete coverage **see page 41**

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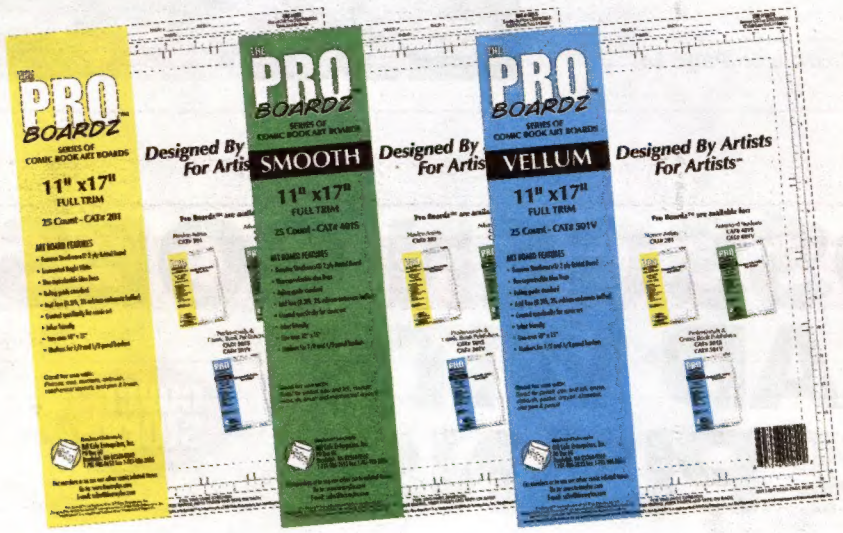

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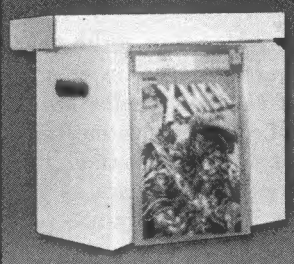

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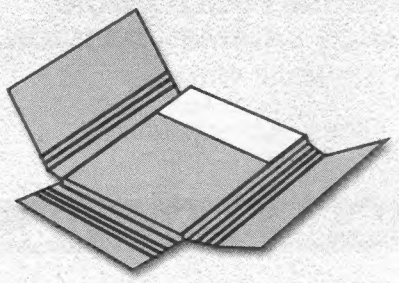

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16-20	14.00	16.75	17.75	21.75	29.50	56.50
21-25	16.75	18.50	21.75	23.50	33.00	75.75
26-30	18.50	20.75	24.00	27.50	34.00	86.75
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EDITORIAL

Alternative comics formats

CD-ROMs and DVDs will work

Nate **Melby**

Through programs like Free Comic Book Day, the comics industry has become more proactive in trying to spread the word of comics to new readers. But has it been working?

Preliminary signs point to yes, but there is definitely more to be done, and one way to turn is computers and DVDs.

Today, everywhere kids turn, there's a computer staring them in the face. A few companies, such as CrossGen, DC, Image, and Marvel have reached out to potential new customers by putting previews *and* full comics online. In other instances, companies like CrossGen have put their comics on DVD and now Marvel has licensed their library to Topics Entertainment.

Now, not only is putting comics on CD-ROMs and DVDs a great idea, it's more likely one of the only ways to get kids into comics.

Unfortunately, there's just too much that grabs the attention of kids today that comics have to fight to keep up. But why doesn't the success of great, eye-catching films like *Spider-Man* and *Daredevil* necessarily lead kids into comics shops? Not when all they have to do is flip to MTV to see the latest Spider-Man adventure or Cartoon Network to see what is happening with The X-Men.

The fact is that we're giving it to them too easy. If a kid is a Justice League fan because of the cartoon, don't let them think that is enough. There is a comic book version as well. Buy 'em one. It only costs $2.25, and who knows? They might ask for another.

So, is adapting comics to CDs and DVDs a wise idea for the medium? Of course it is.

My 10-year-old cousin can surf the net faster and more efficiently than I can. I'm sure most kids are this adept. If your child is a Spider-Man fan, take them to *www.marvel.com*, where for free he or she can read the first issue of *Ultimate Spider-Man*. The same goes for plenty of comics websites. You don't have to get kids in the stores to get them to start reading comics. Chances are, they are as used to reading things on the Web as they are reading from books.

Topics Entertainment recently released a CD-ROM version of 100 Silver Age Marvel Comics that is in many ways perfect for filling the holes in your Silver Age collection without dropping a couple of grand or having to worry about insuring them. In the CD-ROM you get the first 10 appearances of some of Marvel's most storied characters, including Spider-Man, Daredevil, The Incredible Hulk, Wolverine (and the rest of the X-Men), The Fantastic Four, Iron Man, The Avengers, Captain America, and more for $19.99.

Of course, we all love to hold our four-color comics in our hands, but this is just a means to an end. Turning your kids onto comics through media that are more familiar to them could lead to a lifetime of reading. For the most part, all of the products, like the Marvel Comic Book Library CD-ROM, CrossGen's Comics on the Web and DVD program are cheap enough to at least give it a try.

Giving someone a reason to love comics can only help, not hinder, no matter what the format. And who knows, you might create a lifetime comics reader. ✦

LETTERS

MISSING MORISI

Jeff Gelb
MIS
15260 Ventura Blvd., 12th Fl.
Sherman Oaks, CA 91403

Letters **To The Editor**

So we've lost another one, huh? Stylish, unusual, and from a super talent, Pete Morisi's art was somewhat akin to George Tuska's, but less angular. If you'd seen PAM's work, you'd recognize it. There was a quality to his art that made each panel look as if it had been copied from a photo taken just at the point of greatest impact.

His art in the great *Johnny Dynamite noir* comics series looked like a series of paparazzi snapshots seen in some supermarket tabloid. And what can I say about his own creation, Thunderbolt — the hero who just wanted to be left alone to meditate, yet somehow got pulled into the wildest adventures? His Charlton run was much too brief; I recall, as a teen-age fan, being miffed when PAM's art was replaced by Pat Boyette. Boyette was equally stylish but he just wasn't PAM!

His interview a few years back in a great *Comic Book Artist* issue on the Charlton super-hero comics of the '60s was a real surprise to read, as he revealed himself to be a big fan of super-hero comics, and Jack Kirby in particular. That issue ran a super-hero illustration of an original PAM character that was new, and I'd hoped someone somewhere would ask PAM to develop a strip based on the character. After all those years, that illustration told me that PAM was still a great comics artist and, just as important, still loved comics! Sadly, no one took him up on his enthusiasm.

PAM was simply one in a million, and it speaks volumes that one of the only pieces of original art I have cho-

CBG OTHER OPINIONS

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sen to keep, after 40 years of collecting, is a color PAM T-bolt piece. I hope that somewhere Pete A. Morisi has finally earned the opportunity to relax, meditate, and perhaps collaborate on some new super-hero comics with King Kirby himself.

I'd write more but I feel the overwhelming urge to go read an issue of *Thunderbolt* ...

INFECTED

JH Peers III

What issue first got me into comics, you ask in ***CBG*** #1561? And why?

That's a darn good question. Things are a bit hazy; I can't honestly tell you what the first comic book was that I read (or attempted to). But I *can* tell you what really infected me with the comic bug.

I never really "collected" comics regularly until roughly 1984, after reading one specific issue. I was born in 1973, so the time I was really "ready" to read comics wasn't until about 1978 or 1979; even then, I think I more or less "interacted" with the comics. I still have some filled with crayon scribbles over Superman's chest or Spidey's webbing; others are coverless with pictures cut out or simply torn — in half! "I was so much older then; I'm younger than that now" (wink wink).

Though my early comic-book memories are clouded in Kiss dolls and Mego Wayne Manor afternoons, I do recall one specific encounter — dare I say? — the turning point in my addiction.

I was sick, the flu or some sort of really bad cold, and my mom came home with a comic book for me to read. (She worked the 3-11 shift as a nurse.) I was pretty "out of it." I was curled up in her bed upstairs. (Dad had long been sequestered to the den, due to his Odin-like snoring.) There was a tap at the door, and I turned my head to see her through sleepy, blurred eyes. She holding a Little Peach plastic bag, and inside it lay the catalyst for the next 20-some years.

You want to know which book it was? I'm trying to build to a climax here. Is it working?

I slooooooowly reached into the bag, my eyes widened, as my fingers gripped the paper. Is this overly dramatic?

Anyway, It was *Amazing Spider-Man* #251, the issue with that really cool Hannigan cover with Spidey's fist emerging from the sea gripping the eerie mask of The Hobgoblin. This issue really struck me, somewhere. The writing was/is fantastic; I think Roger Stern is one of the best in the business, and Tom DeFalco did a wonderful job (in subsequent issues) at propelling the Hobgoblin story beyond Stern's initial plans.

Then, of course, there was the art. Ironically, I just missed John Romita Jr.'s run on the series, as John would soon become my favorite artist (and still is to this day). However, his successor was/is just as artistically blessed.

Ron Frenz should be headlining all the major cons; forget the flavor of the month artists or cover artists from abroad, painters, watercolor maestros — you ain't got nothin' unless you got Frenz, get it? That would be a great T-shirt: "Got Frenz?"

His art was and is solid, great, moody stuff. Janson's inks helped, no doubt, but I think Frenz is one of the most underrated Spidey artists ever! He really captured something. Just take a look at his later issues (the Rose character, specifically) and then look at some other artist's depictions of those characters. No one draws Hammerhead or Kingpin like Frenz, with the exception of the great Jazzy John Romita Sr.

ASM #251 introduced me to a character that just became my own personal Joker. The Hobgoblin just seemed to encapsulate the typical villain, the baddest of the baddies. I imagine readers in the late '60s and '70s felt the same way about the original Goblin (who was loooong gone by the time I got into Spidey). For me, The Green Goblin never carried the weight of The Hobgoblin — I guess, because the character had gone through so many incarnations (though the same can be said of Hobbie too). At that point however, Hobgoblin filled the void of the original Goblin and was really the "main event-er" in *ASM* from #238 to #289, right? That's a good amount of "spotlight" for a character whom we didn't know too much about. Perhaps that mystique and the "cat and mouse," "who is he" tactics of the writers is what made it so darn good?

I would mark the days until the next issue of *ASM*, using my comic-book "funny money" at Dave's Comics in Lowell, Mass., to get the latest chapter in the Spidey-Hobgoblin saga. I couldn't wait for the next issue. I was simply captivated by the magic and artistry of comics, and that's what it's all about. I hope there are kids out there right now who feel the same way; that was a wonderful feeling, and the memory is just as sweet.

Sadly, in the ensuing years, I never found that same connection, that same desire and interest.

CBG FOR ART'S SAKE by Chris Smigliano

SEEMS LIKE ALL THE MAJOR STUDIOS ARE DUMPING ALL THEIR 2-D ANIMATORS IN FAVOR OF COMPUTER ANIMATORS!
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HEY, IF GENERAL ZOD CAN BE THE VOICE OF JOR-EL AND PA KENT CAN FALL SIXTY STORIES UNHARMED, THEN I CAN DRAW TOM IN THE SUIT JUST ONCE!

(Actually that's a lie; Bruce Jones' first story arc on *The Incredible Hulk* — I think it was #34-42, maybe? I found myself really interested in the first few issues, plus Romita Jr.'s art, *yes*!)

Aside from all the mumbo-jumbo, I guess #251 just introduced me to that villain we love to hate. To me, *ASM* #251 is like that song you hear that takes you back to a certain time. Whenever I see the cover, I think of being sick and bored in bed and Mom's impulse gift. I also think of Secret Wars figures and Man at Arms — Am I way off, there?

I was lucky enough to meet Roger Stern (twice) and had him sign my copy of #251 (and some earlier *ASM* issues, as well). I'm still trying to find the elusive Tom DeFalco. In April 2002 at the Pittsburgh con, I got to meet Ron Frenz. He was sitting quietly near the back of the large room, drawing. I put my comic book on the table, shook his hand, and more or less recounted the story to him. (He put up with me, but I'm sure thought I was a nutter.) He signed my book (to me) and commented on Stern's signature. After, that I did the worst thing you can ask an artist at a con: I asked if he would do a sketch for me.

He informed me that he was doing sketches for XX amount of dollars (which, somehow, seemed to eagerly jump from my wallet and into his hands). I walked away after commissioning the sketch and, when I came back to pick it up 15-20 minutes later, I was dumbfounded. (Looking back, I wish I had stayed to watch him draw it; that's something I encourage fans to do.) Anyone who sees that sketch in my collection has the same response, "Whoa!" The Hobgoblin sketch is fantastic, unbelievable; it could have easily been a $50-75 sketch. It was really cool to hold that issue so many years later and have those responsible for it autograph it: fanaticism at its best!

Reminisces and boring anecdotes aside, *ASM* #251 is my Holy Grail because, like the Beatles, it was timing and it has great writing and art. What more could you ask?

On the eve of opening my own comic-book store, I look back over my relationship with comics and that pivotal moment. Justly, *ASM* #251 is the beacon — the North Star, if you will — in my comic-book journey. So, on opening day (whenever that is), I will hang that issue behind the counter and remember how far I have come.

BUYING COMICS "CHEAP"

Chris Juricich
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Berkeley, CA 94702

Doing the dealer thing in comic books has pressed me even more into assuming the role of "cheap buyer." One supposes it all started with working for Viz as a sales manager and getting all of those comp comics free for as long as I did: piles of current Marvel, DC, Dark Horse, Disney, *etc.*, just piling up each month in the corner of the office. "Can I have these?" I asked. "Sure, send one set to Japan — you can have the rest." Cool.

There was a discount war in the mid-'90s between two comics retailers right across the street from each other that ended up with them selling comics at 45% discount. This also, admittedly, fomented an appreciation for getting comics on the cheap. Now, as a dealer, I buy often with the notion of "threes," a standard in the book-buying business: Buy for X, sell for 3X. Or, at least, hope you get to 3X. Not every item one buys will sell for 3X, though certainly some will sell for much more than that. One could presume that it all balances out in the end, or — one could keep sales figures and expenses to know for sure.

Buying "cheap," though, in the case of being a dealer is simply good business sense. How long would I be in business, if I bought comics to sell and made no money on them? It's still odd to get the occasional derisive comment from a seller who finds my offer for his "babies" too low. "These are worth $1,000," he'll wail. "You've offered me $350! Where do you get off?" I usually am polite and tell him that they *are* worth $1,000 — but he has to sell them to a hundred different people over a period of time ... all by himself. Goodbye. Good luck.

On the Internet garage sale *www.craigslist.org* in the SF Bay Area, I posted in mild exasperation a note on "Comic-Book Values 1980 to Present," elaborating that, in 97% of the cases, the comics available are common as dirt, that comics retailers — *if* they are buying — will only pay perhaps $8-10 per long box, that I often pay twice that, so, please, folks — don't expect a lot for funnybooks less than 20 years old. Ironically, though I didn't state that I was looking to buy, folks actually contacted me to see if I was interested — even at my stated price of 5-10¢ apiece!

The advantages of selling comic books for a reader such as me are obvious: One never has a shortage of books to read. One collection had *Tales to Astonish* #53 in it, which I'd never read as a kid — another had a better copy of *G.I. Combat* #136, which had my very first letter published. I also discovered that Image wasn't the complete wastage I had thought it was, since there were a few titles in its library of releases that proved to actually be entertaining, as I read through them before getting around to reselling.

And, miracle of miracles, living in the Bay Area has allowed me access to some of the best comic-book stores in the country, to a large demographic of folks who have comics and want to sell them, and, to a lesser extent, lots and lots of bargain bins. Case in point: I found *Vampire Lestat* #1-12 for 25¢ apiece in one comic-book store: $3 investment sold for $29.99 on eBay. (I wish I could say the same for *Saga of The Sub-Mariner* #1-12.) Also found *JLA: Destiny* #1-4 for $1 apiece. Got to read it, then sold it for $14.99. Examples of the rule of three.

I don't think my experience here can be easily replicated. Just as folks in the 1840s came to California for the gold, I have my own mines to explore around here and am still managing to enjoy myself doing it. While I've made the transit from collector to dealer, I'm still a reader, and the hobby now provides me income as well as entertainment: a nice mix. Moreover, I'm not in a position to actually be encouraging people to make that transition themselves, since it's not for everybody — just as going into business for one's self isn't everyone's calling. If it were, there would be a lot more people hanging out their shingles to make money from their hobbies.

It's a lot of hard work, detail, and knowledge that has been hard-earned through bad buys or poor investments. The attrition rate for comic-book dealers is high — just as it was for retailers about a decade back, if you'll recall.

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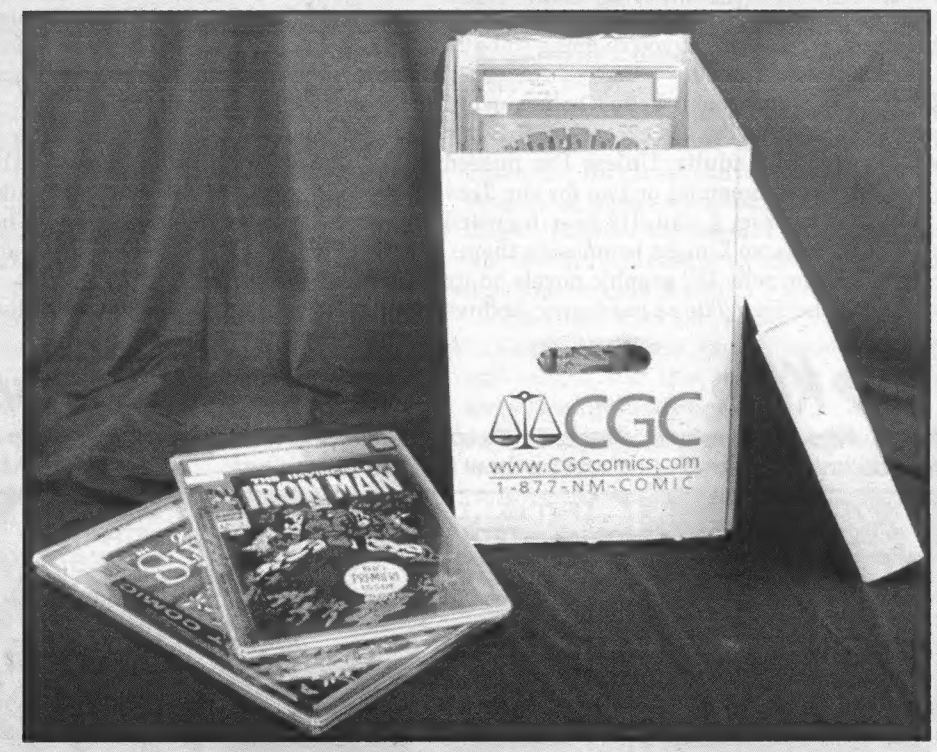

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CBG Reader Question of the Week #1565, with Thanksgiving approaching,

What are you thankful for in comic books today? Why?

*Send your response to Oh, So?, **Comics Buyer's Guide**, 700 E. State St., Iola, WI 54990, or to **ohso@krause.com**.*

ness, but you can't have the fan making business decisions. Running a business is like playing baseball very, very well. The skill sets are as varied — nothing that can't be learned, but …

THE SHADOW IS LIVE

Michael W. Skidmore
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Chicago, IL 60660

Just got back from seeing the *Shadow* radio show performed live here in Chicago at the Lifeline Theatre (*www.lifelinetheatre.com*). It was very well done; they treated the audience like a live studio audience: asking them questions, dancing with them between shows. After expressing what a great movie *Citizen Kane* was, they realize no one in the cast has actually seen it, so they quizzed the audience on what the movie was about. These radio shows are based in 1942, *The Shadow*'s 10th anniversary on the radio — well, actually, his 12th and they explained how he started. The props were excellent; even the flag they had hanging up only had 48 stars. WWII plays a part, as news announcements about recent battles interrupt the show. It is a fun time; if you're going to be in Chicago, it runs through Nov. 30.

I love the *Teen Titans* cartoon! I can't believe what a great job they did. Unless I'm the exception, this is a perfect show for kids and adults. Unless I've missed them, why not have a commercial or two for the *Teen Titans* comics? Of course, I usually fast-forward through the commercials, so I might be missing them.

CartoonNetwork.com sells DC graphic novels on its website along with the *Teen Titans* hardcover Archive but no comics that I could see. If kids are watching this show, here is a chance to get new recruits into comics.

Has there been any news on a *Samurai Jack* Season One DVD set? I know they released the pilot on DVD, but I want the whole season! One other animated show I enjoy is *Wild Thornberries*, but I'm still waiting for the show when Eliza's parents are arrested for child endangerment. She routinely takes on armed poachers, smugglers, and other lowlifes. She wanders into countless wild areas on her own, to encounter said lowlifes along with other wild things. She's almost been eaten by Komodo Dragons, a cobra, dingos, *etc.* It's to be hoped that, when kids go on vacation, they know it isn't safe to explore on their own, even if they have their own chimp.

Maggie: *As far as I know, there are still restrictions on what are deemed "children's shows" on television. Those restrictions include the rule that products affiliated with the show can't be advertised on the show itself.*

There's at least one online petition to Warner Brothers to ask that ***Samurai Jack*** *be released on DVD season by season.*

REMOVE SRP'S FROM COMICS

Matthew Lance
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I read with much interest Peter David's column in ***CBG*** #1562. I agree it's time to remove the "suggested retail price" from comics and books. This would end control of pricing by publishers and return pricing to retailers and their customers. Once upon a time, this was known as the "free market," and it is nice to see a bookseller embracing this concept.

The publishers' pricing system has made retailers for many years play games with discounting and memberships to price comic books at a price their market will bear. For example, a hardcover book lists for about $30 these days. But do you pay $30 for that book?

No, first the store is forced to discount the book, because most folks don't want to spend $30 on a book.

Next, because the bookseller is competing with movies, computer games, and Outback Steak House for your entertainment dollar, they get you to buy an annual membership card at a small fee to further defray the cost of the book. After all this, you likely get to the actual price of the book — which leaves some small profit for the publisher, retailer, and some change in the customer's pocket. It works much the same way at my local comic-book shop, where various levels of membership are offered in order to discount the actual cost of the comic-book purchases.

I'm all for a system that prices books at their actual cost and ends the practice of discounting to get people to buy a book that was priced too high to begin with. If removing the price from a comic book can do this, I say do it!

It's time retailers and their customers were not held hostage by publisher pricing.

BACK TO BASICS

David Matteini
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New York, NY 10003

As an avid Batman collector, I was happy to acquire a VG copy of *Batman* #158 (Sep 63) recently. As I read it, I realized that modern comics publishers have a lot that they can learn from their past.

For starters, this issue had, not one story, but three! The stories were a bit campy, to be sure, but not as much as you might expect from this infamous era in The Dark Knight's history. Furthermore, all the stories were chock-full of words telling a complete, developed story with tight pencils that made the adventure come to life.

Too often, your typical new comic book will have minuscule dialogue and text boxes and will be an excuse for the artist of the month to do splash upon splash.

The focus of this issue seemed to be with the stories being told; modern comics should return to that norm. Just as a point of comparison, I can read just about any current title in less than five minutes. It took me 20 minutes to read the entirety of *Batman* #158, including the letters column! Oh, yes, how could I *not* mention the letters column? By far one of my most favorite things to read in old comics, here fans of that age wrote about *Batman* #155 (Apr 63) — the first Silver Age appearance of The Penguin — and gave numerous suggestions as to who they would like to see in this title.

Losing touch with the fans by removing the letters column was a huge mistake. Fans enjoy reading other fans' comments, and publishers should take note as to their customers' input.

Please don't misconstrue this. I would be the first to say that there is an abundant amount of high-quality material being produced in comics today, but it is extremely frustrating and aggravating to pick up a new comic book, only to realize it is Part One of 12 and then be able to "read" the entire issue within five minutes and be out $3 for the pleasure.

Comics need to return to their roots of telling good stories that appeal to wide audiences (including children) that give more entertainment value for the dollar. Multi-part storylines are fun but are horribly intimidating for those new readers.

And we can use all the new readers we can get.

LAST KISS — **BY JOHN LUSTIG**

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Art © 2003 Mario Hernandez

	Price	Story Pgs.	Panels	Price/Page	Price/Pnl
Supreme Power #2	$2.99	22	166	13.6¢	1.8¢
Alias #25	$2.99	23	154	13.0¢	1.9¢
Ultimate X-Men #37	$2.25	22	117	10.2¢	1.9¢
Batman #616	$2.25	22	100	10.2¢	2.3¢
New X-Men #146	$2.25	22	92	10.2¢	2.4¢
El Cazador #1	$2.95	32	112	9.2¢	2.6¢
Tom Strong #21	$2.95	24	107	12.3¢	2.8¢
Generations III #8	$2.95	22	98	13.4¢	3.0¢
Path #17	$2.95	22	97	13.4¢	3.1¢
JSA #51	$2.50	22	79	11.4¢	3.2¢

MORE PLOT, PLEASE

John Genduso
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Fallbrook, CA 92028

I like a lot of CrossGen's series. I buy some of them regularly. My favorite is probably *The Path* followed by *Ruse* and *Crux*. However, I am considering dropping the books from my list. Why? I always get the feeling that I'm not quite getting my $2.95 worth of story from these books.

*[**Spoiler Warning:** This paragraph describes the plot of the issue.]* Case in point: In *The Path* #17, Obo San seeks an alliance with a rival clan and does battle with a member of this clan. Obo San wins the battle and gains the alliance. I'm not describing the first few pages here; I'm describing the *entire issue! For $2.95!*

Before making any decision about dropping CrossGen books from my list, I decided to do an informal survey. I grabbed random books from my current reading stack and compared the story vs. price ratio. The results are above.

Among the titles I surveyed, *Ultimate X-Men* seemed to offer the most value for the money. *Batman* #616 and *New X-Men* #146 also had respectable showings. *The Path* #17 was the worst value, followed closely by *Generations III* #8. I'm assuming that *El Cazador* #1 was a specially priced first issue and the page count will drop in subsequent issues.

I'm not claiming that my survey is scientific, but it did bear out my suspicions about *The Path* compared to the other series I read. I also realize that readers could make an argument about quality *versus* quantity here. However, I tend to think of all of these comics as quality series. (Otherwise, I wouldn't be buying them.)

So how about it, CrossGen? Maybe it's time to start rewarding your fan base with a little more story density.

***JJM:** I am confident that both average panel count and average word count have decreased over the years, although we haven't been able to confirm that through actual content analysis. There's no doubt that Steve Ditko, working on a nine-panel grid in **Amazing Spider-Man**, was able to deliver more scenes.*

That said, there's surely a counter-balancing cost. In re-reading comics from the early 1980s I remember as being good stories, I now see that some great artists were having to draw on postage stamps.

ANOTHER *DOOM PATROL* VOTE

Stephen Nunet
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Racine, WI 53405

I had to respond to Rick Lowe's letter in ***CBG*** #1562 about reviving The Doom Patrol. Although I'm a bigger fan of Grant Morrison's version, I would love to see a new *Doom Patrol* series with the original team. Or at least with Cliff and the Negative Man, since Elasti-Girl never fit the tragic mode of her male counterparts. After all, she still looked normal, and her situation wasn't any stranger than that of any other super-hero.

As for Rick Lowe wanting either John Byrne or a combination team of Byrne and Chris Claremont working on a new *Doom Patrol* series, I think that it would be very interesting. I don't know how Claremont would feel writing *Doom Patrol*, but I have read at least two different interviews with Byrne, who said that he'd love to work on a series featuring the team. Byrne even stated in one of his interviews that he had asked some of the bosses at DC if he could do a *Doom Patrol* series and, surprisingly, they rejected his offer.

But anything's possible in the comic-book world, and I'm crossing my fingers that Byrne will one day be the writer-artist of a new *Doom Patrol* series!

NOT SO OUT OF PRINT

Ted Nolan

I would like to address Jack Abramowitz' "Out of Print" comments in ***CBG*** #1561, as well as Peter David's recent DVD musings.

First, I would like to direct you to the website of the excellent "Project Gutenberg." Project Gutenberg is a volunteer effort to put public-domain books online for free. These are not "e-books" that need special reader software, but simple text files which can be read with any Web browser or text editor on Windows, Mac, Unix, or even DOS systems. Checking for Abramowitz' specific queries, I find that they do, in fact, have *Robur the Conqueror* and *Master of the World* available in both English and the original French. The Web address for Project Gutenberg is *www.gutenberg.net*, and, if you do a search for "Verne," those two titles (as well as many others) will come up.

Second, I would like to point out that, in many cases today, the Internet trumps the vagaries of particular countries' publisher policy. A book, DVD, or CD that is out of print in America may well be "in print" in the UK or even as close as Canada. In particular, if you have an account with America's Amazon.com, you also have an account with the UK's Amazon.co.uk and Canada's Amazon.ca. In each case, your credit-card company will do any currency conversions automatically, and, though shipment from overseas will cost more and take somewhat longer, it is not prohibitive. (If you order DVDs from outside the North America, you will need a multi-region DVD player, but, as these are available for under $200, this is not a real barrier for serious collectors.)

I was unable to locate Peter David's desideratum *Tarzan and His Mate* on DVD (though the restored version with the nude swimming scene *is* available in this country on VHS), but the original *Tarzan* is available on DVD from Japan.

AN UNSTOPPABLE FORCE

Steve Ogden
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Thank you for the nice Shadow coverage in ***CBG*** #1562. I have always enjoyed The Shadow, no matter what incarnation certain comics companies have done with him. And, of course, those great radio shows.

There is something that just grabs me when it comes to the pulp heroes. While I thrill to The Shadow's daring exploits, Doc Savage is my #1 pulp hero. The Shadow and The Avenger tie for second place. But can you imagine what an unstoppable force against evil Doc, The Shadow, and The Avenger would make? So it boggles my mind why Conde Nast, for whatever reason, keeps these wonderful characters under lock and key. We need to see these characters in the comics pages.

"Catching up With" Anthony Tollin in the issue was a blast. Mr. Tollin, if you are reading this: Thank you for your great work with the old radio shows. I buy various radio collections and love reading his research. Also, "The Making of a Legend" tape with Tollin included in the *Shadow Chronicles* radio-show set is top-notch, very informative, and well put together. I am looking forward to his upcoming books. And thanks to Maggie and ***CBG*** for the heads-up on that.

The "RetroView" was a perfect addition to the issue. Out of all of the different *Shadow* series that exists, for me the 1970s DC series was the best, the O'Neil-Kaluta team captured the characters and the mood so well.

As a young kid reading this series for the first time in 1979, I, too, was put off by Frank Robbins when he came on. But now that I am older and having reread these comics over the years, boy, was I wrong and foolish. Robbins knew what he was doing; his Shadow was the stuff nightmares were made of for the criminals The Shadow killed.

The cover of #5 said it all.

Gotta go; I have some *Shadow* comics to read. It was just too bad that the series was canceled way too soon. What possibilities!

***Maggie:** You never know when a pulp hero will catch your interest again. I just walked into buying a clutch of Nick Carter (Magnet Library) paperbacks at a library sale; how could I pass them up? I spent a happy hour putting the books (supposedly written by Carter, f'hevvin's sake!) in numerical order ...* ✦

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ohso@krause.com

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For our submission guidelines, please send a request (with a self-addressed stamped envelope) to Maggie Thompson at the address above or e-mail *cbgnews@krause.com*

I enjoy being a girl

This column *is* written from a woman's viewpoint

By **Heidi MacDonald**

This column is going to ramble. I apologize in advance. I've got about five too many things going on, and I can't keep a coherent thought in my head. Buckle your seatbelts.

I've been writing this column for more than a year now, and my e-mail address is listed at the end of every column, should anyone wish to contact me with praise or pans. Most of the mail I get is positive, which is always nice and much appreciated. (And I do read it all!) But human nature being what it is, it will always be the one negative letter that shakes the tree.

I recently received a letter which took me to task for a lot of things (including name dropping, but I'll get back to that) but mostly for not saying more about women in comics. "Where was the viewpoint of women in comics," this letter asked. "I have been given a soapbox, so why haven't I used it more?"

This actually got me to thinking, a dangerous proposition under the best of circumstances. While I do talk in passing about women's "issues" (such as my comment on the high number of women participating in the recent SPX in Bethesda) I certainly don't dwell on it, like I used to.

The reasons are many. First off, I think this column, as much like a fever dream diary as it sometimes becomes, is ipso facto written from a woman's viewpoint. I may be clever, but I'm not that clever. This *is* the experience of a woman in comics. It may not be typical, but it certainly isn't atypical. I am very lucky to have access to and relationships with a stunning variety of people in all walks of life. Every day I am thankful for the great fortune that has given me the opportunity to learn from some of the greatest creative minds in the history of comics.

Women in comics haven't always been allowed into the boy's club. I don't know if Ramona Fradon or Dale Messick had the same opportunities I have or even wanted them. But the reality is that even in the 20 years I've been around, women doing comics and being a part of the comics family have become far more prevalent than they were.

With more and more women creating comics (mostly in the indies) and attending conventions, and being comics friendly, we're well past the point where a women who likes comics needs to be idolized and treated like some kind of miraculous freak.

Although they had a place and a time, I feel that what I call the "Women in Comics Panel" era is over. As I said back when I was helping get the Friends of Lulu, the organization for women in comics, off the ground (almost 10 years ago, now), "A woman on every panel, not a panel for every woman." The idea that women's ideas and viewpoints have to be specially highlighted by a "Woman's viewpoint! Coming through!" sign is kind of silly and marginalizing.

Super-talented women abound in every level of the business now. Most important, women cartoonists are doing good work and not being labeled as "women cartoonists."

So anyway, if I don't always address the issue of women in comics directly it's because I don't think it's all that necessary. That isn't to say there aren't inanities in the material, and a lot of inequalities in work opportunities (it really is amazing how few women are working in mainstream comics), but the main thing, as for anyone, is just to keep doing good work. The more attention is paid to "Look! Woman are in comics!" the more ultimately marginalizing it is.

Some silly little things about the comics industry and its ideas about women, especially women readers are still annoying though. Some things will never change. It's really amazing to see that once they started selling comics that weren't about super-heroes in stores that were well-lit and professional, women like comics just fine. Yes, I'm talking about manga in the bookstores. They said it couldn't be done. They were wrong!

Name dropping. From time to time I am accused of name dropping.

Well, I do it.

And that's that.

Because if someone slips on a banana peel, it's funny. If Tony Isabella slips on a banana peel — it's hilarious!

That said, even I get tongue tied once in a while. There is one comics professional who I have met several times who is a perfectly personable guy, friends with my friends, who I find myself unable to even carry on a conversation with. That man is Doug Moench.

A few weeks ago, Moench (note the use of the surname, which I reserve for people I don't know personally) was signing at New York is Book Country, a popular book show here in New York.

I was hanging around with some friends when Moench showed up with his wife and son, and I was reintroduced to all of them. But I felt so shy and tongue-tied I had to turn to his wife, Deb, and say, "I can never talk to him!" The reason, of course, is that I'm a completely gushing fangirl about Moench's work on *Master of Kung Fu* through the years. Maybe I was just the right age, but the mix of pop culture references, eastern philosophy, and '70s style head-on kung fu action was irresistible.

But Moench also wrote one of my all-time favorite passages of comics writing, in an issue of a book called *Electric Warrior*, published by DC back in 1986 as part of their early "prestige" line. Unfortunately my copies of the book have been packed away for five years or so, so I will have to paraphrase it.

The exact details of the story are forgotten, but here's the best I can do. *Electric Warrior* was a science-fiction tale set in a world where robots were called on as a defense system, but one robot in particular began to be human, resulting in all sorts of problems.

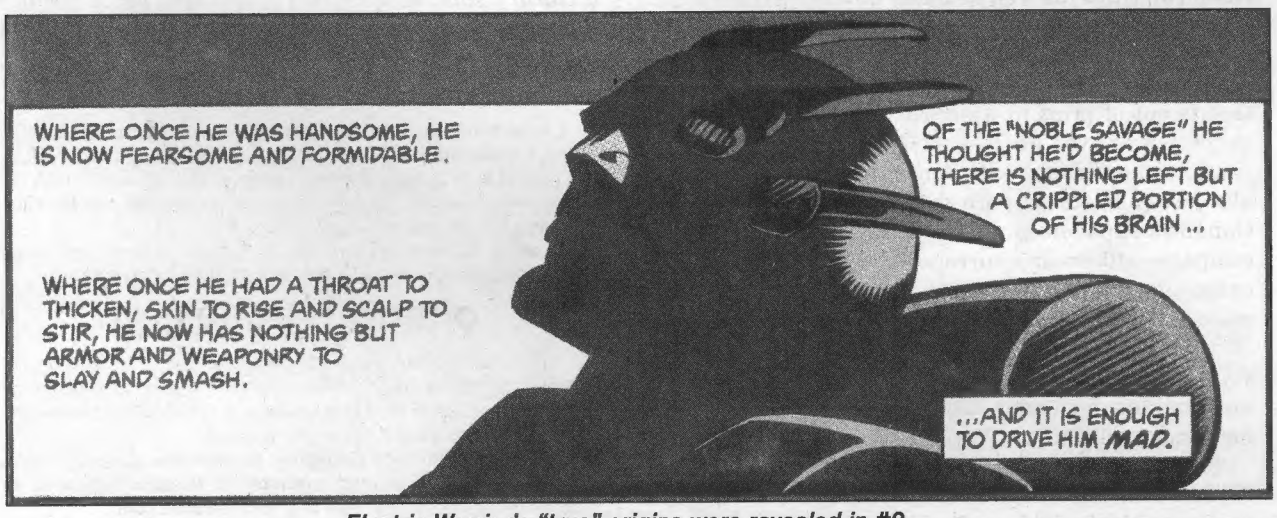
The passage in question concerned this robot, War-Yore, who described waiting to be called into action. While he was on standby, kept in stasis at his base, or in "red time," he couldn't wait to be called out to fight, but once he was out in the world he couldn't wait to get back to the Red Time.

I know I'm not doing justice to this idea, but it's one that has stuck with me ever since as a metaphor for life. Whatever we're doing, at work, for instance, we can't wait to get off work and go home. Once we're at home, we begin to think about work. We're at one party, but we can't enjoy it because we have to get to the next one.

That's the enigma, the paradox of human existence, boiled down into a few comic book panels. That's the beauty of Moench's best work.

So anyway, maybe the next time I meet Doug Moench I'll be able to carry on a civil conversation with him and find out where he gets his ideas, and ask all those other stupid fan questions. And maybe we'll get beyond it someday.

OK, I think that's all I had tinkling around my brain today. Next time, ideas developed outline style like they taught you in school!


WHERE ONCE HE WAS HANDSOME, HE IS NOW FEARSOME AND FORMIDABLE.
WHERE ONCE HE HAD A THROAT TO THICKEN, SKIN TO RISE AND SCALP TO STIR, HE NOW HAS NOTHING BUT ARMOR AND WEAPONRY TO SLAY AND SMASH.
OF THE "NOBLE SAVAGE" HE THOUGHT HE'D BECOME, THERE IS NOTHING LEFT BUT A CRIPPLED PORTION OF HIS BRAIN ...
...AND IT IS ENOUGH TO DRIVE HIM MAD.

Electric Warrior's "true" origins were revealed in #9.

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Heidi can be e-mailed at ***comixace@aol.com.***

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NEW COMIC

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6-7/8 x 10-3/8

	2 mil	3 mil	Resealable 3 mil	Polypropylene Resealable 1.5 mil NEW
100	$ 6.20	$ 7.90	$ 11.25	$ 5.75
500	27.15	33.65	48.85	24.00
1,000	39.85	47.25	81.15	43.90
5,000	174.30	213.15	381.55	209.00
Pcode:	**SNC2**	**SNC3**	**SNC3R**	**SPPNCR**

REGULAR MARVEL

Fits1962-1972 Comics
7-1/8 x 10-3/8

	2 mil	3 mil	Resealable 3 mil	Polypropylene Resealable 1.5 mil NEW
100	$ 6.20	$ 7.90	$ 11.25	$ 6.00
500	27.15	33.65	50.25	25.00
1,000	39.85	47.25	83.40	46.75
5,000	174.30	213.15	381.55	217.50
Pcode:	**SMAR2**	**SMAR3**	**SMAR3R**	**SPPMARR**

GOLDEN AGE COMIC

Fits Pre-1950's Comics
7-7/8 x 10-3/8

	2 mil	3 mil
100	$ 7.25	$ 10.00
500	28.15	39.05
1,000	51.00	66.75
5,000	237.60	308.55
Pcode:	**SGA2**	**SGA3**

DELL & SILVER AGE

Fits 1950's-1962 Comics
7-1/2 x 10-3/8

	2 mil	3 mil
100	$ 6.75	$ 8.70
500	27.80	34.35
1,000	49.60	57.45
5,000	222.15	264.70
Pcode:	**SDSA2**	**SDSA3**

TREASURY

Fits Treasury Comics
10-3/8 x 14-1/4

	2 mil	3 mil	Polypropylene Resealable 1.5 mil NEW
50	$ 7.65	$ 9.85	$ 8.65
100	12.75	15.20	15.70
500	55.20	61.70	58.00
1,000	88.10	114.00	92.50
Pcode:	**STE2**	**STE3**	**SPPTER**

MAGAZINE

Standard
8-5/8 x 11-1/8

	2 mil	3 mil	Polypropylene Resealable 1.5 mil NEW
100	$ 10.20	$ 13.10	$ 7.20
500	34.10	47.60	30.60
1,000	61.45	86.00	54.60
Pcode:	**SMAG2**	**SMAG3**	**SPPMAGR**

Large
8-7/8 x 11-1/8

	2 mil	3 mil	Polypropylene Resealable 1.5 mil NEW
100	$ 11.25	$ 14.50	$ 7.40
500	43.45	52.40	30.80
1,000	67.50	86.00	56.00
Pcode:	**SMAGL2**	**SMAGL3**	**SPPMAGLR**

ORIGINAL ART

11-1/2 x 19 (No Flap)

	3 mil
100	$ 18.90
500	73.10
1,000	139.00
Pcode:	**SOAL**

Note: Bags have 1-1/2" flap unless noted and come in printed outer packs of 100.

BACKING BOARDS

Prod. Code	Description / size (in)	*Grade	Gauge (in)	$/25	$/50	$/100	$/500	$/1,000
KCB30N	**NEW COMIC**	Economy	0.030	$ 3.55	$ 6.50	$ 10.05	$ 35.20	$ 65.10
KAF28N	6-11/16 x 10-3/8	Intermediate	0.028	7.15	12.80	20.00	80.65	142.20
KAF40N		Superior	0.040	12.50	23.10	40.35	175.15	304.70
KCB30R	**REGULAR COMIC**	Economy	0.030	3.55	6.50	10.00	35.20	65.10
KAF28R	6-15/16 x 10-3/8	Intermediate	0.028	7.15	12.80	20.00	80.65	142.20
KAF40R		Superior	0.040	12.50	23.10	40.35	175.15	304.70
KCB30DSA	**DELL & SILVER AGE COMIC**	Economy	0.030	4.30	6.75	10.60	42.90	72.60
KAF28DSA	7-3/16 x 10-3/8	Intermediate	0.028	8.60	13.65	21.10	85.75	150.65
KAF40DSA		Superior	0.040	13.35	23.45	44.35	185.75	322.95
KCB30GA	**GOLDEN AGE COMIC**	Economy	0.030	4.65	7.15	11.25	45.10	76.90
KAF28GA	7-11/16 x 10-3/8	Intermediate	0.028	9.20	14.25	22.40	90.10	159.30
KAF40GA		Superior	0.040	14.40	26.05	45.40	196.90	342.40

***Economy:** 0.030" Thick, non Acid-Free Grade. White on one side. For intermediate storage.
***Intermediate:** 0.028" Thick, Acid-Free, White on both sides. For long term storage.
***Superior:** 0.040" Thick, Acid-Free, White all the way through with 3% alkaline buffer for Indefinite Term Storage.

COMIC DIVIDERS

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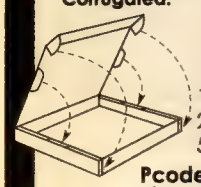
	Plastic	Corrugated 275 lb. test
25	$ 24.00	
50	38.30	$ 15.15
100	66.55	24.20
500	299.50	78.65
1,000	452.55+frt	129.50+frt
	Pcode: DCOMP .030 gauge White Polystyrene.	**Pcode: DCOM** White on both sides. Indexed.

COMIC BOOK MAILERS

200# test Brown Corrugated.

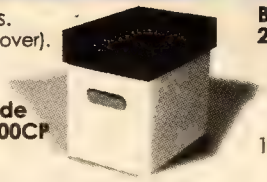


	Holds 12-14 Comics.	NEW Holds up to 28 Comics.
10	$ 11.35	$ 16.45
25	21.30	30.90
50	36.00	52.20
100	57.95	84.00
250	119.80+frt	173.75+frt
500	199.65+frt	289.50+frt
	Pcode: MCOM14 7 1/2 x 10 3/4 x 1 1/4	**Pcode: MCOM28** 7 1/2 x 10 3/4 x 2 1/2

STORAGE/DISPLAY BOXES

PLASTIC Corrugated Storage Box

Holds 75-100 Comics.
(Comes with 3" Deep Cover).
7-13/16 x 11 x 11



2	$ 19.25
5	38.50
10	67.65
25	137.50+frt

Pcode XCC100CP

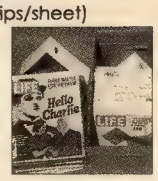
A Superior Storage Box. Made from White Polypropylene Waterproof Corrugated Plastic. Acid Free. Anti-Stat material. UV Resistant. Folds together. Super Strong. Stackable.

FOLD N' HOLD

Box Spacers
22 x 3 (3 Strips/sheet)

5	$ 5.50
10	8.10
25	15.95
50	27.50
100	49.50

Pcode XSP322



MAGAZINE

9 x 11-1/2 x 15

2	$ 14.00
5	32.15
25	114.95
50	207.45
100	304.95+frt

Pcode XMAG150
Holds up to 150 Magazines.

Also use for Golden Age Comics & Folded One Sheets.

LIFE MAGAZINE

11-1/2 x 14-3/4 x 15-3/4

2	$ 15.40
5	33.45
25	123.20
50	215.05
100	312.20+frt

Pcode XLM60
Holds 60-65 Life Magazines or Treasury Comics.

COMPACT COMIC

7-3/4 x 11 x 15

2	$ 11.40
5	25.50
10	39.50
25	81.65
50	121.00+frt
100	217.80+frt

Pcode XCC200
Holds up to 200 Comics.

LONG COMIC

7-3/4 x 11 x 26

2	$ 14.75
5	32.15
10	64.15
25	128.80
50	171.25+frt
100	302.50+frt

Pcode XLC300
Holds up to 300 Comics.

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City State zip All orders under $25 add $4
Card No. NO POST OFFICE BOX NUMBERS FOR FedEx GROUND DELIVERY C.O.D. orders add $6
Exp. Date NY State Residents add 8.25% sales tax
Customer Account Code Florida, states west of the Mississippi, including entire states of LA, MO, MN add 10% for shipping
Signature Day Phone ( ) **TOTAL**

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CURRENT COMICS

*"At **CBG**, we think more great comics are being published today than ever before. It's our mission to keep you informed about the people and publishers making news today."*

How many heads equals a good review?
Tony spells out his criteria!
Tony's Tips, Page 18

The creators, the characters, and the series people are talking about today!

IN BRIEF

Cole branches into art pages

Bill Cole Enterprises has announced a line of comic-book art pages designed for artists at all levels of ability. Cole told ***CBG*** the pages are "all manufactured and printed on acid-free Strathmore paper with an 8.2 pH and a 3% calcium carbonate buffer throughout. We made them with rule lines all the way around and designed them so that artists can design various configurations."

"Customers were calling for better boards," Cole added, "especially for inking. These boards are inker-friendly and won't bleed through. We named them Pro Boardz in line with the other types of products we produce."

Three types of pages are being produced in the initial release. "The Economical 201 series is designed for novice artists and can be used instead of Strathmore's 300 series," Cole said, "while the Superior 400 series comes in both smooth and vellum papers and is erasable for the advanced student. Our Premium 500 line is also available in both smooth and vellum, contains cotton fiber, and is designed for professionals and publishers."

Each variety of paper is available in packs of 25 with price breakdowns for larger quantity purchases. Packs of 100 pages and 250 pages are also available.

BULLETINS AT ONCE!
Get breaking news on CURRENT COMICS right away. Visit http://bulkmail.krause.com to subscribe to our e-mail bulletin. Upon arrival at the site, choose "comics" as an interest, enter your e-mail address, and select that you wish to receive newsletters. You'll receive a weekly preview of upcoming sections — as well as instant news on breaking stories in today's comics hobby!

Concentrating on the future

CrossGen's original titles may be gone but the company's not

By **Nate Melby**

Besides canceling nine titles to make way for the new direction at CrossGen, the company recently promoted its Director of Marketing and Communications Bill Rosemann to Senior Vice President of Publishing to help the company guide its creative choices and to aid readers and retailers with what the company has cooked up for 2004.

Rosemann is now concentrating on the focus at hand: Promoting CrossGen's titles and initiatives while explaining it so readers can get a better grasp of what is going on at CrossGen.

"Just like I experienced at Marvel, sometimes a company needs to restructure itself in order to move forward," Rosemann told ***CBG***. "And while some actions were painful, we're now a leaner company positioned to continue pursuing our goal of telling amazing stories for a worldwide audience."

Rosemann is referring to the company's move to lay off some of its employees, including Vice President of Product Development Tony Panaccio to keep costs down and pay off its freelancers. This is something that Rosemann said is one of CrossGen's top priorities at the moment.

"The realization that we would be unable to pay our freelancers was, as you can imagine, painful and embarrassing. And we didn't help matters with how we handled the situation publicly," Rosemann said.

But at CrossGen things have changed and from now on the handling of affairs in a public forum will no longer be done.

"So as we'll now continue to handle this privately, I also want to apologize to our freelance creators for the situation ... and say that we're doing our best to solve the matter as quickly as possible," he added.

Comics: CrossGen is concentrating on future plans for its characters and the upcoming event *The War*, which will conclude with nine of its titles ending (including its four original titles). The decision on what titles to cancel was not an easy one for the staff at CrossGen Rosemann said.

"Yes, a talking monkey in every classroom. Kids dig Po Po!"
— Bill Rosemann

"Every title is someone's favorite, so we didn't make these decisions lightly," he added. "The short answer is, with the approaching finale to the Sigil-Bearers versus Negation Empire saga, their time had come. Some characters had completed their story-arcs or would soon do so, either in the pages of their own title or in *The War*. Meanwhile, married to art is economics, and, while we gave most of these titles three years to find a readership, if the audience doesn't respond in necessary numbers, you have to give other projects their time in the spotlight. But remember, just because their titles have ended, that doesn't mean that the characters are gone forever."

Even though not all the characters will be gone, as reported in ***CBG*** #1564, *Crux*, *The First*, *Meridian*, *Mystic*, *The Path*, *Ruse*, *Scion*, *Sigil*, and *Solus* will. The company instead is focusing on its current and upcoming titles like *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang* and *El Cazador*, with more to come.

Bill Rosemann

Non-comics changes: CrossGen has made headlines for its ability to reach into other media, including schools and DVD players and Rosemann said that no changes have been made in those initiatives.

"Our characters continue their journey into other mediums," Rosemann said. "In fact, due to consumer response, Intec Interactive is going back to press on all 10 Digital Comic Books."

Rosemann also said that the company is happy to see positive results continuing to come back from its education initiative, the Bridges program.

"Initial reports indicate that Bridges is increasing students' reading levels by an average of one full grade level after participating in the program. And to top it off, *Way of the Rat* has now been added to the teaching options. Yes, a talking monkey in every classroom! Kids dig Po Po!" ✦

INSIDE THIS SECTION

- **Tony's Tips** by Tony Isabella 18
- **Reading Room** 20
- **Comics Guide** by Maggie Thompson 22

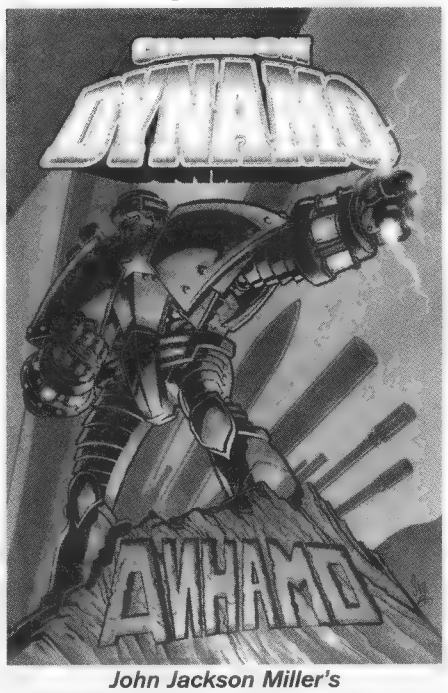
Marvel suspends submissions

Publisher inundated with Epic pitches

By **Nate Melby**

Marvel Comics has suspended submissions for its new Epic line, due to the amount of response the company has had since beginning the program in March

"The response has simply been incredible, and because of the high volume of pitches we're still receiving, we're no longer going to be able to evaluate them and respond to aspiring creators in a fair and reasonable time frame," Epic Editor Teresa Focarile said. "Creators who have taken the time and energy to go through the submission process are entitled to a timely response.



John Jackson Miller's ***Crimson Dynamo.***

"Now that we realize the level of response and the kind of commitment these projects require, we are going to restructure the Epic process across all editorial offices and implement some new procedures that will hopefully have us back on track before too long.

"Meanwhile, the early results have been extremely positive, and we've already found new talent whose Epic projects fans will not only see in 2004, but who are also working on and pitching for projects within the regular Marvel editorial offices, like John Jackson Miller, writer of his own Epic series *Crimson Dynamo* and as the new regular *Iron Man* writer."

In addition to the current six-issue *Crimson Dynamo* story arc, Epic titles currently being published include *Trouble* and *Gun Theory*.

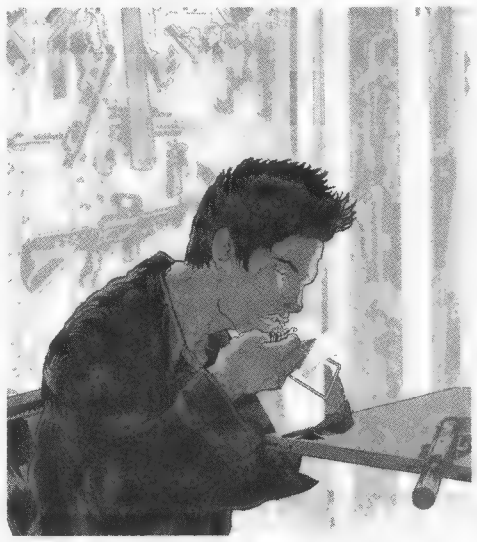
While new Epic Comics submissions are no longer being accepted for now, Marvel reminds creators that they are still looking for new writers on an ongoing basis, and the standard submission options are still in place. Details can be found at *http://www.marvel.com/about/submissions_guide*.

In addition to getting the opportunity to pitch for new projects, writers found through this process may have the chance to have their stories in two new, ongoing bi-monthly titles premiering in early 2004 — *Spider-Man Unlimited* and *X-Men Unlimited*. Each title will feature two stories debuting new writers teamed with established artists telling stories about Marvel's biggest icons.

"We're still seeking and developing new talent and have created showcases just for these new writers, and just for the time being we're scaling down the Epic process to give aspiring creators the attention and professional response they merit," concluded Focarile.

As reported in ***CBG*** #1551, Dark Horse Comics is still accepting submissions. Dark Horse Publicist Lee Dawson said that submissions are still coming in and the company is now beginning to sift through them.

Currently DC Comics' policy is to only look at submissions at conventions according to the company's website. ✦



Daniel Way's ***Gun Theory.***

NOW SPEAKING

We're continuing to discuss the new *Standard Catalog of Comic Books* 2nd Edition (shipping now!) and all things comics-related on your radio dial (well, some of your radio dials).

In the coming weeks, tune into coauthor John Jackson Miller on:

October 31

Beaver Dam, Wis.: WBEV 1430 AM "The Ideas Exchange," 10:06 a.m. CT

November 1

Madison, Wis. metro: WRCO 1450 AM, 8 p.m CT (rescheduled from earlier)

November 3

The Joe Mazza Show (nationally syndicated), 1:30 a.m. ET

November 5

Fargo, ND. metro: KKBX 101.9 FM, 7:30 a.m. MT

November 6

Fort Atkinson, Wis.: WFAW 940 AM "Morning Magazine," 8:30 a.m. CT

November 10

Appleton, Wis.: WHBY 1150 AM "The Good Neighbor Show," 9:30 a.m. CT

November 19

Lexington, Ky.: WLAP 630 AM, 7:45 a.m. ET

Elyria, Ohio: WEOL 930 AM, 9:10 a.m. ET

December 1

Tacoma, Wash.: KLAY 1180 AM, 3 p.m. PT

NEW COMICS shipping Nov. 9-15

The following information is taken from publisher and distributor solicitations and updates and is as accurate as possible at press time. Check with your local retailer to find out what day new comics go on the shelves. Comics that are delayed or rescheduled will be tracked in future *CBG Calendars*.

Note: ✪ indicates a rescheduled comic book that appeared in a previous *CBG Calendar*.

Archie Comic Publications

Archie and Friends #77, $2.19
Betty #132, $2.19
Betty & Veronica Digest #143, $2.39
Jughead's Double-Digest #99, $3.59

CrossGen

Brian Pulido Lady Death #10, $2.95
Lady Death Traveler Vol. 1 TP, $9.95
Meridian Vol. 6: Changing Course TP, $15.95
Negation #24, $2.95
Sigil #42, $2.95
Sojourn #29, $2.95
Solus Vol. 1: Genesis TP, $15.95

Dark Horse

Blade of the Immortal #84, $2.99
Cannon God Exaxxion #19, $2.99
Conan the Legend One-Shot, $0.25
Ring Vol. 1 TP, $14.95
Star Wars: Infinities-Return of the Jedi #1, $2.99
Star Wars: The Stark Hyperspace War TP, $12.95
Syn #4, $2.99

DC Comics

Adventures of Superman #622, $2.25
Aquaman #12, $2.50
Batgirl: Year One TP, $17.95
Batman: Child of Dreams SC, $19.95
Batman: Death and the Maidens #4, $2.95
Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight #173, $2.50
Danger Girl: Viva Las Danger, $4.95
Demon: Driven Out #3, $2.50
Doctor Fate #4, $2.50
Elfquest Wolfrider Vol. 2 TP, $9.95
Fables #19, $2.50
Fallen Angel #5, $2.50
Gen 13 #15, $2.95
Gotham Central #13, $2.50
Green Arrow #32, $2.50
H-E-R-O #10, $2.50
JSA #54, $2.50
Legion #26, $2.50
Nightwing #87, $2.25
Scooby-Doo #78, $2.25
Sgt. Rock Archives Vol. 2 HC, $49.95
Spirit Archives Vol. 12 HC, $49.95
Stormwatch: Team Achilles #17, $2.95
Superman & Batman Generations: III #11, $2.95
Teen Titans #5, $2.50
Thundercats: Hammerhands Revenge #2, $2.95
Two-Step #2, $2.95

Digital Webbing

Digital Webbing Presents #12, $2.95

Gutsoon! Entertainment

Bomber Girl Vol. 1 TP, $9.95
Fist of North Star Master Ed Vol. 7 GN, $17.95
Fist of the Blue Sky Vol. 3 TP, $9.95

Image Comics

40 Oz Collected TP, $9.95
Capes #3, $2.95
✪ *Cloudfall* #1, $4.95 (Nov. 2-8)
✪ *Faction Paradox* #2, $2.95 (Oct. 5-11)
G.I. Joe #24, (two covers $2.95)
Hellhounds #4, $2.95
Powers Vol. 5: Anarchy TP, $14.95
Rex Mundi #8, $2.95
Sei: Death and Legend GN, $6.95
✪ *Soul of A Samurai* #3 (of 4), $5.95 (Aug 24-30)
Tomb Raider #36, $2.99 (Nov)
Wildguard: Casting Call #3, (two covers $2.95)
Witchblade #71, $2.99 (Nov)

Komikwerks

Komikwerks Vol. 2 TP, $9.95

Marvel Comics

Avengers #73, $2.25
Captain America #20, $2.99
Emma Frost #5, $2.50
Fantastic Four #506 (#77), $2.25
Human Torch #8, $2.99
Human Torch Vol. 1: Burn TP, $14.99
Incredible Hulk #63, $2.25
Iron Man #74, $2.99
Kingpin #6, $2.50
Marvel 1602 #4, $3.50
Nyx #2, $2.99
Punisher #35, $2.99
Punisher Vol. 5: Streets of Laredo TP, $17.99
Spectacular Spider-Man #6, $2.25
Thanos Vol. 3: Marvel Universe the End TP, $16.99
✪ *Ultimate Adventures* #6, $2.99 (Sep 7-13)
Ultimate Six #4, $2.25
Ultimate X-Men #39, $2.25
✪ *Ultimates* #12, $2.25 (Sep. 21-27)
Uncanny X-Men #433, $2.25
X-Treme X-Men #34, $2.99

Oni Press

Scooter Girl #5, $2.99
Three Days In Europe TP, $14.95

TokyoPop

Battle Royale Vol. 4 GN, $9.99
Cyborg 009 Vol. 2 GN , $9.99
Duklyon: Clamp School Defenders Vol. 2 GN, $9.99
GTO Vol. 15 GN, $9.99
Kare Kano Vol. 6 GN, $9.99
Kodocha: Vol. 10 Sanas Stage GN, $9.99
Mars Vol. 15 GN, $9.99
Peach Girl: Change of Heart Vol. 5 TP, $9.99
Spongebob Squarepants Cinemanga Vol. 2 GN, $7.99

Twomorrows Publishing

Hero Gets Girl TP, $14.95

Viz

Gundam the Origin #8, $7.95
Phoenix Vol. 3: Yamato Space TP, $15.95
Wedding Peach Vol. 3 TP, $9.95
X 1999 Vol. 12 TP Movement, $9.95

NOW APPEARING!

November 2

Jamar Nicholas (*Detective Boogaloo: Hip-Hop Cop*) at Aetna Fire Hall, Main St., Newark, **Delaware** 19711, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

November 15

Alex Ross (*JLA: Truth and Justice* artist), **Paul Dini** (*JLA: Truth and Justice* writer), and **Chip Kidd** (*Mythology: The DC Art of Alex Ross* designer/writer) at Lee's Comics, 1020 N. Rengstorff Ave., Suite F, Mountain View, **California** 94043, from 2 to 4 p.m.

November 19

Dan Hellman (*Legal Action Comics*) and **Jim Higgins** (*New Thing*) at Jim Hanley's Universe, 4 W. 33rd St., New York, **New York** 10001, from 5 to 8 p.m.

Gallery Showings
Oct. 18-Dec. 31

The Art of Insight Studios at True Believers Comics & Gallery, 435 S. Guadalupe, Santa Fe, **New Mexico** 87501. Exhibit hours: 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday.

Lecture series
Nov. 4-Dec. 2

Arlen Schumer (author of *The Silver Age of Comic Book Art*) lecturing on super-heroes of the 1960s at The Graduate Center, CUNY, 365 Fifth Ave., New York, **New York** 10016, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. each Tuesday evening. Course cost: $120. Call (212) 817-8215 to register.

Trio of creators appear at Lee's Comics

By **Nate Melby**

This will not be the first time that Alex Ross and Paul Dini have visited Lee's Comics in Mountain View, Cal., but this time they are bringing a friend: Chip Kidd. On November 15 the trio will be at Lee Hester's comics store to promote their new projects *JLA: Liberty and Justice* and *Mythology: The DC Comics Art of Alex Ross*.

"Alex and Paul have kind of made it a tradition and what we did this time was include Chip Kidd," Hester told ***CBG***. "This is his very first appearance here and the reason I really wanted Chip Kidd is because he has collaborated with both of them a lot and Chip Kidd, like Alex Ross and Paul Dini is absolutely #1 in his respective field, which is book design."

The three will be there to promote the new books, signing copies from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. and Hester said that he usually relies on editorial coverage, locally and nationally, to get the word out about signings at his store.

Despite the construction going on at the store, it will not take away from the festive atmosphere surrounding the release of the two books.

"As we speak I am in the middle of construction," Hester said. "This came up suddenly, but the construction will be done or at least out of the way by the time the guys are here to sign."

Hester said that there are a couple more signings he is hoping to have soon.

"I would like to have Michael Chabon in here to promote his Dark Horse and DC work. I also spoke with George Pérez about doing a signing for the collected *JLA/Avengers* when that is released." ✦

An open letter from Bill Jemas

***[Editor's note:** In the wake of Marvel's recent reorganization of its management team, the following letter was sent out by Bill Jemas Oct. 23.]*

Greetings from The House of Ideas,

Early last week, Marvel announced that I had changed jobs from COO to Chief Marketing Officer. This move significantly reduced my daily responsibilities for publishing and licensing. Since the nature of this shift was somewhat ambiguous, many good people in the comics community and the licensing business called to express their concern for me and for Marvel.

Today, I'd like to say publicly what I have told my friends in private. This has been a voluntary and important transition. I continue to support, help guide and implement the management changes at Marvel, and I am very much looking forward to the new challenges I will have with respect to my own role within the company.

If you are reading this, you probably know the highlights of the past four years and understand that right now, Marvel Publishing and Consumer Products are thriving. What had looked like mission impossible in 1999 is mission accomplished in 2003. I feel very confident about handing the torch to both Dan Buckley and Tim Rothwell who will continue the growth curve in these divisions over the next several years. We brought them here to do the job that their strong backgrounds and industry experience have trained them to do.

At the same time, the friends that I work for and with are giving me rein to do what I do best; exploring new challenges. I have some ideas about how Marvel's remarkable assets and expertise might be applied to new business areas. I am grateful for the support I am getting to pursue these opportunities, and do not intend to let the team down.

Marvel's senior management team is a closely knit group. Over the past four years, we have survived some pretty hard times by pulling together as a team and by forging strong relationships with our creative and business partners. Now that we have turned our businesses around, we would be foolish to turn our backs on each other and wise to explore new areas where our proven entertainment business model can be applied. ✦

CONFIRMED SHIPPING

They're out there: We have received confirmation that the following titles have shipped and should be available in stores. This reflects shipping information received through October 24:

Aardvark Vanaheim: *Cerebus* #295, $2.25 (Oct)

AC Comics: *Nightveil Vol. 2* #1, $6.95 (Aug)

Amaze Ink (Slave Labor Graphics): *Punch and Judy: Grand Guignol GN*, $6.95 (Oct)

Antarctic Press: *Gold Digger Pkt Manga Vol. 1 TP*, $9.99 (Sep)
Rehá #1, $2.99 (Oct)
You Can Draw Monsters, $19.95 (Oct)

Archie Comic Publications: *Betty & Veronica Spectacular* #63, $2.19 (Oct. 26-Nov. 1)
Holiday Fun Digest #8, $2.39 (Oct. 19-25)
Laugh Digest #188, $2.39 (Oct. 19-25)
Sabrina Vol. 2 #51, $2.19 (Oct. 19-25)

Avatar Press: *Hellina: Seduction* #1/2 Statuesque Ed, $5.95 (Nov)
Shi: Sempo #1/2 Prism Foil Ed, $12.95 (Nov)
Threshold #51 Pandora Western Ed, $5.95 (Nov)

Blue Line Production: *How To Break-In to The Comic Book Business* #3, $5.95 (Jul)

Boneyard Press: *Book of Legion*, $4.95 (Aug)
Psycho Hunter #5, $3.95 (Aug)

Bongo Comics: *Bart Simpson Comics* #14, $2.99 (Oct)

Bon-Vue Entertainment: *Bad Pussy* #1, $9.95 (Nov)

Bries: *Snapshots GN*, $13.95 (Aug)

Carnal Comics: *Demi's Strange Bedfellows* #3, $5.95 (Sep)

Comic Library International: *Edison's Frankenstein 1910 Vol. 1 GN*, $7.95 (Sp Ed $19.95) (Oct)

CPM Manga: *Alien Nine Ultimate Dvd & GN Collection*, $59.99 (Oct)
Slayers Special Book 4: Spellbound GN, $15.95 (Oct. 19-25)

CrossGen: *Brath* #8, $2.95 (Oct. 5-11)
Brian Pulido's Lady Death #9, $2.95 (Oct. 12-18)
Path #19, $2.95 (Oct. 5-11)
Route 666 #16, $2.95 (Oct)
Ruse: Archard's Agents Pugilistic Pete, $2.95 (Oct. 5-11)
Scion #40, $2.95 (Oct)

Dark Horse: *Berserk Vol. 1: The Black Swordsman TP*, $13.95 (Oct. 12-18)
Buffy the Vampire Slayer #62, (two covers $2.99) (Oct. 19-25)
Goon #3, $2.99 (Oct. 19-25)
Lone #2, $2.99 (Oct. 12-18)

DC Comics: *Avengers/JLA* #2, $5.95 (Oct. 19-25)
Batgirl #45, $2.50 (Oct. 19-25)
Batman #620, $2.25 (Oct. 19-25)
Birds of Prey #60, $2.50 (Oct. 19-25)
Cinnamon: El Ciclo #3, $2.50 (Oct. 19-25)
Hellblazer #189, $2.75 (Oct. 19-25)
H-E-R-O: Powers and Abilities TP, $9.95 (Oct. 19-25)
Icandy #2, $2.50 (Oct. 19-25)
Looney Tunes: Back In Action The Movie, $3.95 (Oct. 19-25)
Losers #5, $2.95 (Oct. 12-18)
Outsiders #5, $2.50 (Oct. 19-25)
Planetary #17, $2.95 (Oct. 19-25)
Possessed #4, $2.95 (Oct. 19-25)
Reign of the Zodiac #3, $2.75 (Oct. 19-25)
Sleeper #10, $2.95 (Oct. 19-25)
Superman #198, $2.25 (Oct. 19-25)
Thundercats: Dogs of War #5, $2.95 (Oct. 19-25)
Wildcats Version 3.0 #15, $2.95 (Oct. 19-25)
Wonder Woman #197, $2.25 (Oct. 19-25)

Dreamwave: *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles Animated* #5, $2.95 (Oct)

Fantagraphics Books: *Menage A Trois* #4, $3.50 (Oct)

Gemstone Publishing: *Donald Duck and Friends* #309, $2.95 (Oct. 19-25)
Mickey Mouse and Friends #258, $2.95 (Oct. 19-25)

Gutsoon! Entertainment: *City Hunter Vol. 3 TP*, $9.95 (Oct. 12-18)
First President of Japan Vol. 3 TP, $9.95 (Oct. 12-18)
Slam Dunk Vol. 3 TP, $9.95 (Oct. 12-18)

Harris Comics: *Vampirella Fan Club 2003 Reg Ed*, $19.95 (Sp Ed $29.95) (May)

I C Entertainment: *Di Gi Charat Vol. 1 GN*, $10.95 (Aug)

IDW Publishing: *CSI: Miami Smoking Gun*, $6.99 (Oct)

Image Comics: *Casefiles: Sam & Twitch* #4, $2.50 (Aug 10-16)
Liberty Meadows #34, $2.95 (Oct. 12-18)
Magdalena #3 (of 4), $2.99 (Sep)
Wildguard Casting Call #2, (two covers $2.95) (Oct. 19-25)

Keenspot Entertainment: *Chopping Block Vol. 1 TP*, $9.95 (Oct)

Marvel Comics: *Amazing Spider-Man* #500 (#59), $3.50
Captain America #19, $2.99 (Oct. 5-11)
Daredevil Vol. 7: Hardcore TP, $13.99 (Oct. 19-25)
Emma Frost #4, $2.50 (Oct. 5-11)
Fantastic Four #505 (#76), $2.25
Hawkeye #1, $2.99 (Oct. 19-25)
Inhumans #6, $2.50 (Oct. 19-25)
Punisher #34, $2.99 (Oct. 19-25)
Sentinel #8, $2.50 (Oct. 19-25)
Trouble #4, $2.99 (Oct. 12-18)
Uncanny X-Men #432, $2.25 (Oct. 12-18)
X-Statix #13, $2.99 (Sep 7-13)

Oni Press: *Queen & Country Vol. 4 Operation Blackwall TP*, $8.95 (Sp. Ed. $20.00) (Oct. 19-25)

Sentai Studios: *NHS: Prom Formula Super Special*, $3.95 (Oct)

Studio Underhill: *Between the Cracks: the Bride One Shot*, $2.95 (Nov)

Syncopated Comics: *How To Be A Real Good Cartoonist*, $6.95 (Nov)

Tantrum Entertainment: *Mindsight Frank Cirocco Sketchbook*, $14.95 (Nov)

Tony Raiola: *Johnny Hazard Vol. 5 Color Sunday Strips*, $15.00 (Nov)

Via Media Publishing Company: *Tales of the Hermit Vol. 1: Castle In Rain the Judge HC*, $29.95 (Nov)
Tales of the Hermit Vol. 2: Yamabushi & Homecoming HC, $29.95 (Nov)

Viz: *Please Save My Earth Vol. 1 TP*, $9.95 (Oct)

Warpton Comics: *Natures Guard* #3 (of 3), $2.50 (Sep)

HERITAGE COMICS

Even without the urging of the Ringmaster and his dreaded Hypno-Hat, we're sure you'll want to bid in the upcoming Heritage Signature Auction, to be held on November 20-23 in Arlington, TX. Rare and collectible comic books (including an incredible run of Mile High TARGET COMICS, Harvey Kurtzman's personal file copies of many key issues, and more goodies from the files of Stan "the Man" Lee), amazing original artwork (from Steranko, Schulz, Schomburg, Kirby, Colan, and more), plus cool memorabilia, rock-and-roll items, and vintage movie posters too many and wonderful to list.

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It began with a Brownie

Diamond International Galleries chronicles history of comics characters

By **Sharon Korbeck**

Speaking from the Italian marble floor at Diamond International Galleries in Timonium, Md., Galleries President John Snyder shared his view of why comics and comic character art have endured for centuries — and why people are entranced with the work of the Galleries.

"I think people are sort of enamored by the breadth."

Established in the early 1990s, Diamond International Galleries is just one arm of Diamond Comic Distributors, which also includes Gemstone Publishing. The corporation is owned by Baltimore's Stephen A. Geppi.

Comics are, Snyder said, "the people's art." And that's, in part, what a visit to the pristine gallery will teach newcomers and reinforce in veteran comics followers.

"People identify with it," Snyder said.

And after stepping into the gallery, it's easy to see why. Literally hundreds of years of comics and toys are cataloged, displayed, and revered.

A darkened library houses bound volumes of every comic book imaginable. Harvey, Marvel, E.C. — it's all there. Comics toys are nestled alongside for good measure. *Action Comics* #1 sits under a protected display case. And a genuine Frederick Remington bronze is used to hold open the door.

In the dimly lit ambiance of the main gallery, everything from the 1930s *Popeye* art of E.C. Segar to Gustaf Tenggren's more classical drawings for *Snow White* cozy up to Alex Ross' modern interpretations of super-heroes and Carl Barks' playful Disney ducks. And the interplay of styles, colors, and subjects — which might seem discordant — feels appropriate and natural.

That's because of the greater timeline of comics history, according to Snyder.

"It has a very intelligent movement," he said.

Photos by Sharon Korbeck

Diamond CEO Steve Geppi took a moment to pose with another super-hero of the industry.

That's when Snyder, a well-dressed man donning a Mickey Mouse watch, lapses into his favorite topic — the history of comics characters and their influence on every aspect of pop culture.

"We sometimes forget that what we're doing has been done for 100 years," said Snyder, who knows whereof he speaks. In addition to being surrounded daily by Geppi's fantastic collections, Snyder has more than 7,000 examples of comics character toys, premiums, and advertisements in his personal collection.

"What I've collected here is every character. I tried to get a really good example of what was out there," he said.

For Snyder, his personal interest into the evolution of the comics character takes on a sociological tone. As he continues to document comics history, he finds it both rewarding and challenging.

In a recent article published by Gemstone Publishing, Snyder said, "It is a daunting and often underappreciated task, but it serves the crucial purpose of bringing the masses closer in touch with what really happened."

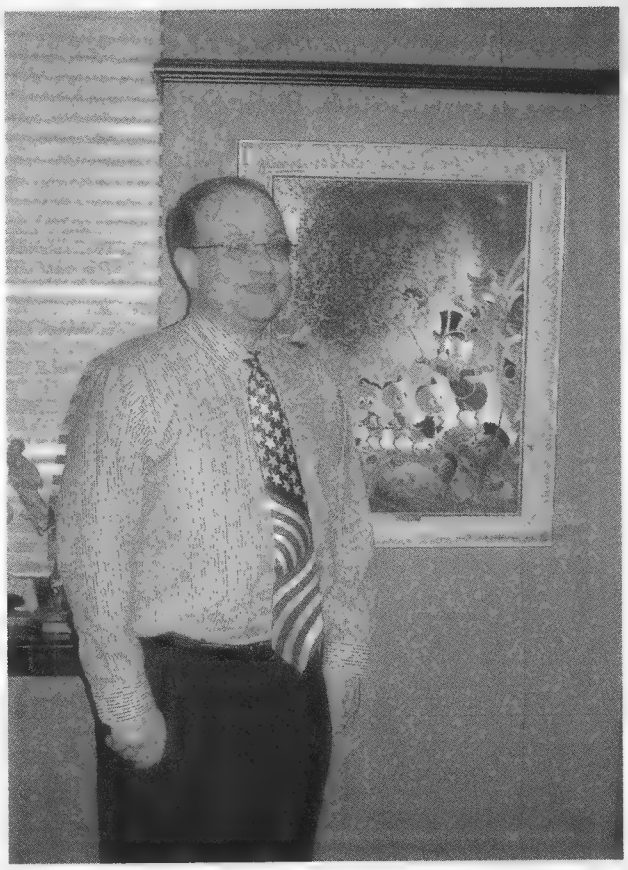
In a nutshell, what really happened, Snyder said, can be depicted in "a pyramid in reverse." One comics character — Palmer Cox's Brownies from 1883 — formed the base of the pyramid. As time went on, comics characters became more plentiful and they began to promote anything and everything. The "pyramid in reverse" grew — and hasn't stopped growing yet. Characters such as Jimmy Neutron and Spongebob Squarepants are latching onto the collective history of comics. And it's only on track to continue.

As a collector and documentor of pop culture, Snyder is well-positioned at Diamond to give rhyme and reason behind the vast collection.

He'll walk visitors through the pillared halls of the gallery, pointing out a newly hung display of Segar strip art or an early political cartoon by Jimmy Swinnerton. He'll not only show you the beginnings of Li'l Abner's Dogpatch; he'll tell you how creator Al Capp got there in

*Diamond International Galleries President John Snyder cozies up in his office with pal Uncle Scrooge and a copy of **Action Comics** #1.*

*The entrance to Diamond International Galleries showcases an original piece of Superman art by Joe Shuster and a homage to **Fantastic Four** #1 by J.K. Snyder III. Fine bone porcelain figures of Disney characters appear throughout the galleries.*



Gemstone Publishing Executive Editor J.C. Vaughn showed one of his favorite pieces in the galleries, an Uncle Scrooge piece by Carl Barks

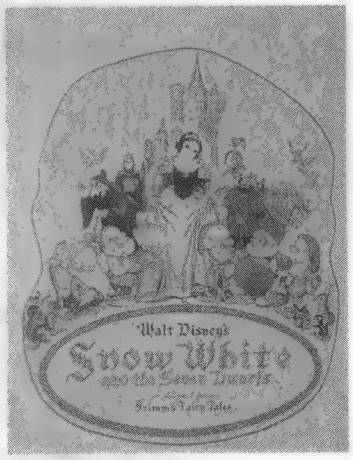
the first place.

But while he's effusive about his erudite knowledge of comics, he's modest as well. No doubt a proud father, he was shy to point out that his son is following in a familiar path — son J.K. Snyder III is an artist in his own right, with some of his work displayed in the gallery foyer and used as the covers for recent editions of the *Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide*.

Like its overseer, Diamond International Galleries remains a brilliant study in more than a century of comics history.

And even though history tends to repeat itself, the story's far from told. There's still room on the walls for one more precious piece of art and a place in pop culture for many more characters to come.

Sharon Korbeck is ***CBG*** *sister publication* ***Toy Shop****'s editorial director.*



Original 1937 Gustaf Tenggren art for Walt Disney's ***Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*** *is showcased in the foyer at Diamond International Galleries.*

John Snyder showed pages from a recently purchased collection of newspaper comics. The massive, well-organized collection spans many decades.

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A *Blanket(s)* review

Tony explains and applies his criteria

Properly, we should read for power. Man reading should be man intensely alive. The book should be a ball of light in one's hand.

— Ezra Pound

When I review comic books and other works here, I rate them on a scale of zero to five Tonys. Besides giving me a chance to paste my smiling disembodied face all over these pages, this caricature is also meant to emphasize the personal nature of my reviews — and, for that matter, those of other critics.

We all champion good writing and good art, but we clearly do not all agree on what is good writing and good art or even their relative importance to the works we review. As my veteran readers know, I'm more a story guy than an art guy. The next critic might lean in the opposite direction.

I like the human touch. For me, the most spectacular epic in the world falls short, if I don't care about its players. For some, the spectacle and the vastness are the story.

I like all kinds of comics. Some critics only like super-hero or other fantastic adventure comics. Others disdain any works that feature these elements. The best of us try to make our prejudices known within our reviews, the better for readers to judge whether or not they, themselves, will enjoy what we review.

I was surprised recently when a friend of mine told me that he didn't consider "three Tonys" to be a positive rating — this despite my common prefacing of that very rating with phases like "perfectly respectable." He believed the rating to represent 3/5 of a perfect score (or only 60% of a possible 100%) — and he considered that to be a failing grade. I didn't see it that way, but I do appreciate his viewpoint.

I don't write reviews for creators or their publishers, though many have written thanking me for reviews of their works, favorable or not. I write them for my readers and I think this rating system is clear within the context of my reviews.

However, since I don't want even one reader to misunderstand what those lovable floating heads stand for, I have prepared this handy guide to my ratings. I just hope all these extra Tony heads don't put too serious a dent in ***CBG***'s budget.

Zero Tonys: Burn your money before buying a comic book that gets this rating. It doesn't necessarily mean that there is absolutely nothing of value here, but whatever value it might possess shrinks into insignificance before its overall awfulness.

One Tony: Buy something else. I found some element within the item that wasn't completely dreadful, but it wasn't within a parsec of being enough for me to recommend it, when there are dozens upon dozens of better comics available.

Two Tonys: This is your judgment call. I found some things of value but not enough to recommend the item. Hopefully, my review gives you enough information to decide whether you want to take a chance on this item.

By **Tony Isabella**

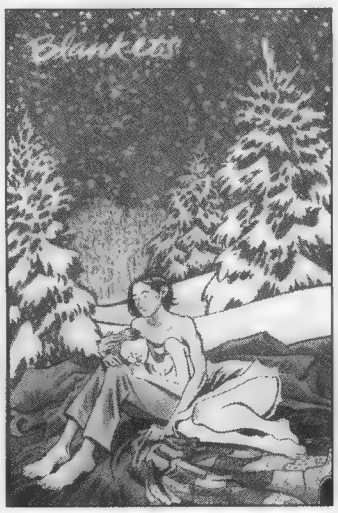
Three Tonys: As I said earlier, this rating denotes a comic book I find "perfectly respectable." Yes, there are better comic books out there, but I wouldn't regret buying this one. Again, based on the details in the review, you should be able to determine whether this item would be of interest to you.

Four Tonys: I absolutely recommend any comic book that earns this rating. Unless you just don't like the genre or subject matter — or the past work of the creators — I believe you will enjoy this item. Check it out.

Five Tonys: Any comic book that gets this rating is among the very best the industry has to offer. From where I sit, your comics reading wouldn't be complete without it, even if said item's genre or subject matter *doesn't* particularly appeal to you. I strongly urge you to buy this issue.

Six Tonys: This off-the-chart rarely given rating is reserved only for a comic book or other work I consider required reading, either by virtue of undeniable artistry in story and illustration or the indispensable information and insights it provides students of the art form. I live for comics and books this good.

I always try to call them as I see them. I hope the above chart gives you an idea of *how* I see them.



Craig Thompson's ***Blankets*** (Top Shelf, $29.95) is certainly an ambitious work, a nearly 600-page graphic novel of family and first love and also of surviving family and first love. It tells a human story in epic detail, retaining the heart of the story throughout.

I'm impressed by Thompson's ability to maintain his emotional focus for hundreds of pages, but mere endurance would be a poor standard on which to judge a work which offers so much more.

Protagonist Craig and his younger brother Phil are raised by loving parents of limited emotional and material means. It seemed the parents cling to their religion and their strict interpretation thereof, rather than feeling any joy, getting any fulfillment, or taking any comfort from it. It blinds them to the needs of their sons and the conflicts and dangers the kids face.

Craig's struggles with his religious beliefs are a key element in *Blankets*. He has difficulty reconciling the calls of his heart and soul with the lessons he is taught, often abandoning that which he loves in a misguided application of those lessons. However, his primary challenge is the universal challenge: finding one's way in a world we must make for ourselves.

Craig meets his first love at a Bible camp, something magical in a mind-numbing, soul-numbing situation. Their subsequent long-distance romance strengthens the magic for him. In their exchanges of countless letters and packages, the teen-ager sees the sharing of their spirits. When arrangements are made for Craig to visit with her and her family ...

Nah. That's all the summary you get from me here. At 30 bucks for *Blankets*, you deserve to discover what happens next on a first-hand basis.

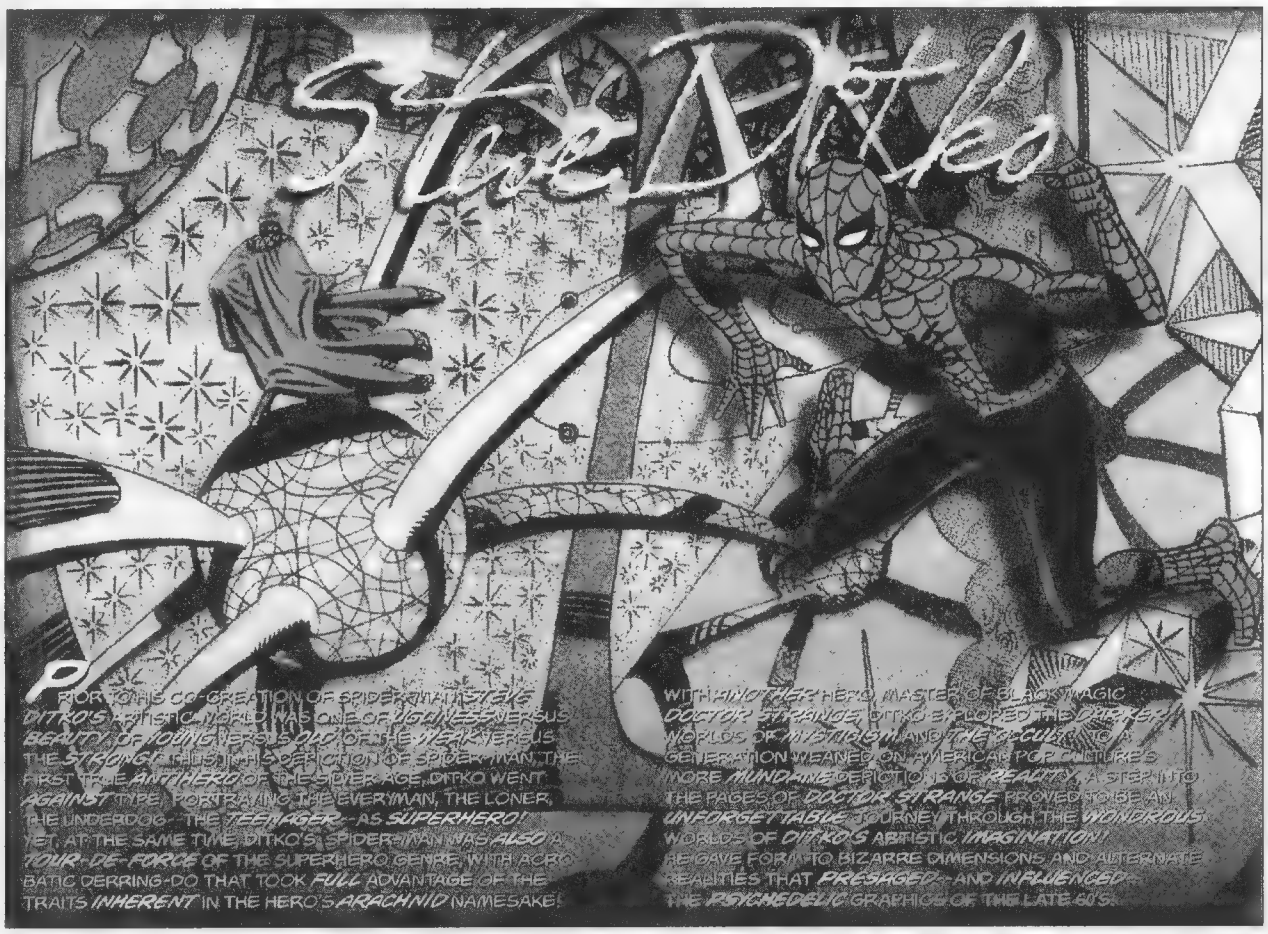
What I *will* tell you is that Thompson is a great storyteller. He ties the reader to Craig in the earliest pages of this novel and keeps him or her interested in the kid's life. Without the special effects of adventure fiction, he crafts a genuine page-turner of a comic.

I didn't have the opportunity to read *Blankets* in one sitting, but, had family responsibilities not taken precedence, I certainly would have. Once my children were safely nestled in slumber, I returned to the book, didn't put it down until I had finished it, and didn't stop thinking about it for a long while afterward.

Blankets isn't perfect. Reading through a second time, I get the feeling there should be another chapter or two between the end of Craig's visit with his girlfriend and the final chapter of the novel, even though I can see why Thompson might have decided to cut to the chase. Still, this perceived flaw doesn't loom as large in my thoughts as one particular scene.

It's a scene in which a parent discovers something about the parent's child. The look on the parent's face is still haunting me days later. I know what lies behind that look and I wonder what I would feel in that situation.

The greatest strength of *Blankets* is that connection Thompson forges between its characters and its readers. The more I consider the novel, the more I


Steve Ditko
PRIOR TO HIS CO-CREATION OF SPIDER-MAN, STEVE DITKO'S ARTISTIC WORLD WAS ONE OF UGLINESS VERSUS BEAUTY, OF YOUNG VERSUS OLD, OF THE WEAK VERSUS THE STRONG. THUS, IN HIS DEPICTION OF SPIDER-MAN, THE FIRST TRUE ANTI-HERO OF THE SPIDER-AGE, DITKO WENT AGAINST TYPE, PORTRAYING THE EVERYMAN, THE LONER, THE UNDERDOG -- THE TEENAGER -- AS SUPERHERO! YET, AT THE SAME TIME, DITKO'S SPIDER-MAN WAS ALSO A TOUR-DE-FORCE OF THE SUPERHERO GENRE, WITH ACRO-BATIC DERRING-DO THAT TOOK FULL ADVANTAGE OF THE TRAITS INHERENT IN THE HERO'S ARACHNID NAMESAKE!
WITH ANOTHER HERO, MASTER OF BLACK MAGIC -- DOCTOR STRANGE, DITKO EXPLORED THE DARKER WORLDS OF MYSTERY AND THE OCCULT. A GENERATION WEANED ON AMERICAN POP CULTURE'S MORE MUNDANE DEPICTIONS OF REALITY, A STEP INTO THE PAGES OF DOCTOR STRANGE PROVED TO BE AN UNFORGETTABLE JOURNEY THROUGH THE WONDROUS WORLDS OF DITKO'S ARTISTIC IMAGINATION! HE GAVE FORM TO BIZARRE DIMENSIONS AND ALTERNATE REALITIES THAT PRESAGED -- AND INFLUENCED -- THE PSYCHEDELIC GRAPHICS OF THE LATE 60'S.

Arlen Schumer's ***The Silver Age of Comic Book Art*** *spotlights several artists, including Steve Ditko (above).*

like it — and that's why it picks up five out of five Tonys.

Kudos are also extended to Top Shelf. Even given the success of Thompson's *Good-Bye, Chunky Rice* (1999), it was courageous for a small publisher to take on the financial risk of publishing such a weighty tome. If you would like to see what else Top Shelf has to offer, visit its website at *www.topshelf-comix.com*.

Arlen Schumer's ***The Silver Age of Comic Book Art*** (Collectors Press, $29.95) should not be read at one sitting. A "coffee-table book" examining the impact of several artists on the comics of the 1960s and beyond, it is best savored a chapter at a time. Between chapters, if you're anything like me, you'll have the irresistible urge to grab a pile of comics by Carmine Infantino or Steve Ditko or any of the other featured artists and lose yourself in a joyous world of nostalgic wonderment.

Schumer juggles several roles. He is a comics historian who regularly lectures at museums and universities, including a lecture series that begins Nov. 4 at CUNY's Graduate Center. (See *Now Appearing* on Page 14 for more details.) He is also half of Dynamic Duo Studios, a firm that often uses comics images in ads for magazines and advertising campaigns. He's as big a comics fan as any of us.

In *The Silver Age of Comic Book Art,* Schumer examines the work of Infantino, Ditko, Jack Kirby, Gil Kane, Joe Kubert, Gene Colan, Steranko, and Neal Adams, splashing their work across bold spreads that attempt to rival in design the grandeur and power the artists achieved in their comics. On occasion, I felt the designs made the copy a bit difficult to read — a few places where the backgrounds behind the words were a tad too dark or where the eye had to pause to decide what block of copy to read next — but I'm notoriously and gleefully picky when it comes to form over content. I probably had an unhappy love affair with a designer in my misspent youth. Think no more of my minor quibble in regards to Schumer's book.

The Silver Age is a work made to be studied intently. Schumer includes the artists' comments on the thinking that went into their artistic decisions and shares his own insights into their work, as well. As much as I already admired the artists showcased herein, my admiration grew with each new discovery of the whys and the hows of their work.

Any fans who read Schumer's book should come away from it with a greater appreciation of the comics art form. Any professionals who read it should come away from it inspired by the possibilities which can be explored in their own work.

The Silver Age of Comic Book Art deserves the full five Tonys. Not only does it belong in your personal comics libraries — not to mention public and school libraries — but I think it would make one heck of a terrific gift for the comics fans in your lives. If you *really* love them — oh, Sainted Wife Barbara — spring for the deluxe hardcover edition ($49.95) with its 16 additional pages and silver metal jacket.

www.collectorspress.com

It's with sadness that I report the retirement from the comics industry of Bob "Answer Man" Rozakis. My pal wrote hundreds, maybe even thousands, of stories for DC Comics, including the critically acclaimed *Superman: The Secret Years* mini-series and *'Mazing Man*, the series he created with artist Stephen DeStefano. Additionally, as DC's ace production manager, he was instrumental in bringing new printing and production advances to its vast range of publications, all while establishing a reputation for quality control that has not been equaled since his departure.

Since leaving DC, while working full-time as an accountant and part-time as a creative writing teacher, Rozakis, whose knowledge of all things comics earned him his "Answer Man" title, wrote a weekly trivia columns for the Silver Bullet Comics website and a daily trivia contest for World Famous Comics.

At the end of his "It's Bob Ro, the Answer Man" column for the week of Oct. 25, a reader asked Bob if he liked his job, and he responded thus:

Yes, I do — 46 weeks a year as an accountant and six weeks as a writing teacher make for a happy life.

Now that it has been five years since I left DC Comics after more than twenty-five years on staff, I am officially closing the door on my career in the comic book business. No farewell tour like my old pal Tony Isabella, no retirement dinner, no parade. Just time to turn out the lights and go home.

This is my 183rd column for Silver Bullet Comics … three and a half years' worth and somewhere in the neighborhood of 300,000 words. During that time, you've allowed me to share my opinions, tell some stories about life in the comic book business, and, mostly, return to being the Answer Man. It's been a lot of fun. (All of the columns will remain archived and available here for the foreseeable future, by the way.)

Thanks to Jason Brice for inviting me to join the crew here. Thanks to my official unofficial researcher (and pinch-hitting columnist) John Wells for bringing his pile of information along to help me out. Thanks also to my various pals in the biz — Bob Greenberger, Len Wein, Rick Taylor, and Kurt Busiek, to mention a few — and outside it — Bob Buethe, Howard Margolin, and Tom Galloway come to mind — for your remarkable memories and able assistance.

Most of all, thanks to all of you who came here each week to peruse my writing. I wish you health, happiness and wisdom … and may we all meet again sometime.

— Bob Rozakis

"Be always displeased with what you are if you desire to be what you are not. Always add, always walk, always proceed. Neither stand still nor go back nor deviate." — St. Augustine

You can read Bob's archived columns at *www.silver-bulletcomicbooks.com/bobro*.

Bob's retirement is the comics industry's loss. I hope he'll forgive me, if I hope for a happy surprise twist before this story reaches its final panel.

Being far less classy than Bob, I plan on going out as loudly as possible at the final stop of my Official Tony Isabella Farewell Tour, which will be Mid-Ohio-Con, Nov. 29 and 30, at the lovely Hilton Columbus at Easton Town Center in Columbus, Ohio. To check out the fabulous guest list, go to *www.midohiocon.com*.

I hope to see you at the convention because it just wouldn't be a party without you. ✦

Tony's Tips *is © 2003 Tony Isabella.* *Comments on this column or review items for future columns should be sent to Tony at: Tony's Tips, P.O. Box 1502, Medina, OH 44258. You can also e-mail Tony at:* ***tonyisa@ohio.net***.

READING ROOM

Questions? Comments? Criticisms? Subpoenas?

Correspondence to CBG, 700 E. State St., Iola, WI 54990
or ohso@krause.com

Shuck Unmasked — Top Shelf Productions

$14.95, b/w, 168 pgs., available now
Writers: Rick Smith, Tania Menesse; Artist: Smith
reviewed by **Jim Johnson**

The story's main character is an other-worldly demon who once bore the responsibility of keeping souls of the recently deceased from escaping Purgatory. So the last thing anyone would expect is a heartwarming story about friendship and love, but Smith and Menesse pull off a surprisingly emotional tale about how such bonds cannot be destroyed, even in death.

Shuck is the demon, who is now "retired" and living quietly in mortal guise in a typical suburban neighborhood. But many of the souls he formerly guarded are running loose, among them his former neighbor, whom he invites over and reminisces with on Halloween, when the wall between this world and the afterlife is at its thinnest.

Another soul on the loose is that of his departed wife, and Shuck's understated sense of loss and undying love are what makes the entire novel a sad but endearing treat. Smith's *Little Orphan Annie*-style caricatures and strategic usage of silhouettes further strengthen the book's subdued emotions.

One major annoyance, though, is practically unforgivable. The writers' insistent usage of Herriman-esque quotations and spelling makes reading this book the literary equivalent of walking through a swamp. The 160 pages of such college-level baby-talk as "Yer potentate concokshuns allus keps the ristliss dead at bay" make getting through this a chore, despite this story's other merits. It's worth it, though; just don't imagine the voice of Jar Jar Binks while reading.

Shuck Unmasked

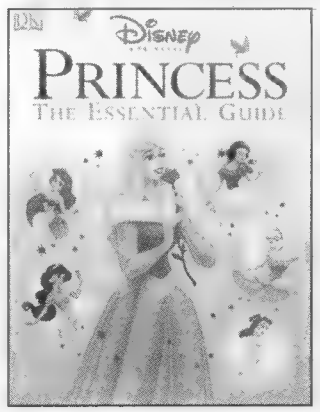
PRO	CON
Endearing story of undying love.	Al dis weird speek confuzin.

GRADE: B

www.topshelfcomix.com
ISBN: 1-891830-47-3

Disney Princess: The Essential Guide — DK

$12.99, color, 48 pgs., available now
reviewed by **Jack Abramowitz**



This slim volume is in the style of the *Essential Guides* for Superman, The Hulk, *et al.* but is aimed at a much younger audience.

Those who want to read bios for the half-dozen premiere princesses (Snow White, Cinderella, Aurora, Ariel, Belle, and Jasmine), as well as synopses for their movies, will find this is the place to go.

Each entry includes info on the princess' fashions, their supporting casts, and the worlds in which they live. Unlike The X-Men, Batman, and others featured in DK's *Essential Guides*, these characters do not have as much history. Sure, some of them have been around for decades, but they average one feature film each. Accordingly, there is not as much about them that cannot be ascertained by watching 90 minutes of classic animation per character.

This book is a worthy addition for the library of completist Disneyphiles or princess fans, but there's not much for the casual reader.

Disney Princess Ess. Guide

PRO	CON
Pretty pictures.	Not much news.

GRADE: B-

www.dkpublishing.com

Thanos #1 — Marvel

$2.99, color, 32 pgs., available now
Artist and writer: Jim Starlin
reviewed by **Brett Weiss**

The first issue of this ongoing series primarily restates what has gone before, especially in terms of the title character's origin and motives. True Believers will recall The Titanic Titan's undying (and, in a sense, unrequited) love for Lady Death, his destruction of Rigel-3 (accompanied by the resultant deaths of more than five million Rigellians), and his ambivalent relationship with Adam Warlock.

What the issue *doesn't* cover are the specifics of some of the powers of the ultra-powerful Thanos. One could imagine a DC fan saying: "Wow! He has Omega Beams, just like Darkseid! He even kinda *looks* like Darkseid!"

So this is a comic book long-time readers may find overly familiar and new readers might find lacking in details.

Still, the tremendous quality of the art, the epic scope and look of the story (love those colors by Christie Scheele), and the questionable nature of Thanos (Does he truly seek redemption?) make the issue well worth picking up.

Starlin was a pioneering writer-artist in the late '70s and early '80s (he wrote and drew *The Death of Captain Marvel*), and this is a solid effort by a master of the cosmic comics genre.

Thanos #1

PRO	CON
Starlin the stalwart.	Mostly backstory.

GRADE: B

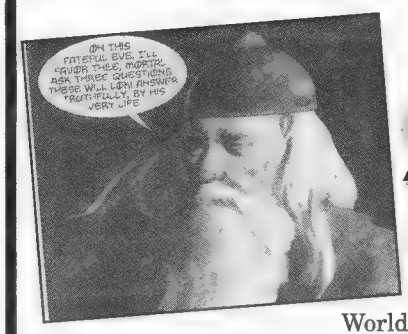
www.marvel.com

PICK OF THE WEEK

The Life Eaters

DC/WildStorm

$29.95, color, 144 pgs., available now
Writer: David Brin; Artist: Scott Hampton



After a disappointing first graphic novel (*Star Trek: The Next Generation — Forgiveness*) Brin and Hampton team up again for an alternate history graphic novel where the Norse gods are summoned to help the Nazi cause during World War II. And this time, the team gives readers a slam-bang adventure that doesn't let up.

Of course, the usual Norse archetypes pop up here with Odin and Thor helping the Nazis and Loki betraying the group by aiding the Allies, but Brin digs deeper and questions whether the "gods" are really mythological beings or aliens or simply belief made flesh. An intriguing concept and one that has been explored elsewhere with "gods" fading into obscurity as their followers dwindle in number. The only drawback to the story is that Brin doesn't fully apply this concept to the other mythological pantheons, leaving readers to do that work.

Hampton's art is well-suited to this story with its powerful imagery and need for flame-lit effects. One scene, featuring a squadron of helicopters invading southeast Asia, is reminiscent of a similar scene from *Apocalypse Now* and one can almost hear the strains of Wagner's "Ride of the Valkyries."

This is a book that can easily be shared with non-comics readers who will quickly be immersed in the story and forget that they're reading a comic book. Look for this book to pop up on several awards lists next year.

The Life Eaters

PRO	CON
Excellent alternate history.	More adventures needed.

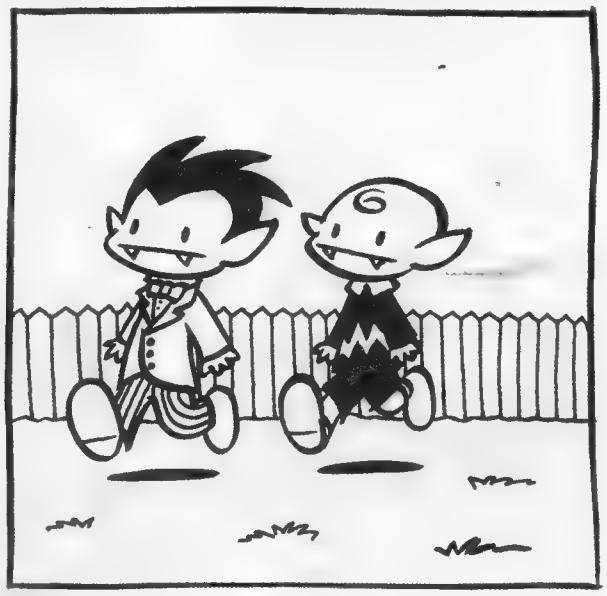
GRADE: A+

reviewed by **Brent Frankenhoff**
www.dccomics.com

Patrick the Wolf Boy Wedding Special — Blindwolf

$2.95, b/w, 32 pgs., available now
Writers: Art Baltazar, Franco Aureliani; Artist: Baltazar
reviewed by **Jim Johnson**

A husband glances through the latest issue of his wife's gardening magazine, as he goes through the mail, and, not being a gardener himself, would swear that the same issue is mailed out month after month.



Patrick the Wolf Boy is much like that gardening magazine. In every issue, regardless of circumstance, he's always chasing squirrels, speaking in one-syllable grunts, and just barely staying out of trouble. And the typical cover motif is a 3/4 shot of a running Patrick, right foot always forward. Frickin' always.

So what?

Amid what could be construed by the untrained eye as boring repetition lies a quirky and innocent charm that's always likeable. And funny. After all, how many times have readers seen Snoopy slip into his Red Baron fantasy or Dagwood plow into the mailman or Sarge pummel Beetle Bailey to a pulp? Somehow, it's always good for at least a chuckle, the kind that Baltazar has come close to mastering in his relatively short career.

So Patrick's doing his usual thing, this time at a wedding (Baltazar's own, it appears!), and that's just fine. So check it out; it's easy to find; just look for the cover with Patrick running.

Patrick Wedding Special

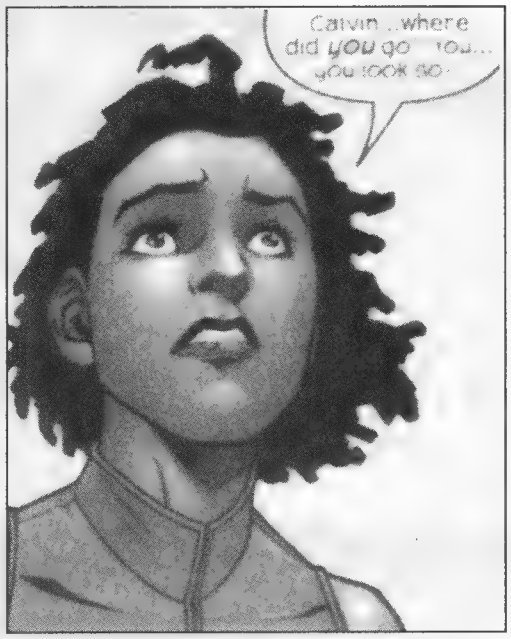
PRO	CON
Patrick's usual shenanigans.	Again.

GRADE: A-

www.blindwolfstudios.com

Exiles #35 — Marvel

$2.99, color, 32 pgs., available now
Writer: Judd Winick; Artist: Clayton Henry
reviewed by **Brett Weiss**



The first eight pages of this issue acquaints new readers with the titular mutant super-hero team and what they have been up to recently, and that makes for fairly dull reading. *Exiles* newbies will now be familiar with the basic concept of the book and the powers of the heroes, but they may not care. The personalities of the characters themselves aren't really fleshed out, and this is disappointing, especially coming from such a talented writer as Judd Winick.

Page 9 kicks the action into gear somewhat, as The Exiles hook up with an alternate-reality rendition of The Fantastic Four, during the time of Reed Richards and company's oft-told origin tale. The alternate FF seem disappointingly the same as their "real world" counterparts, with the exception of one hero in particular (guess which one?) having an even grumpier disposition than usual.

The art here is clear, pleasantly rendered super-hero fare (there's no mistaking this for anything but a Marvel comic book), but the issue as a whole isn't particularly engaging, especially in its failure to provide the sense of urgency or danger one might expect from a story revolving around a team of adventurers with all-important missions.

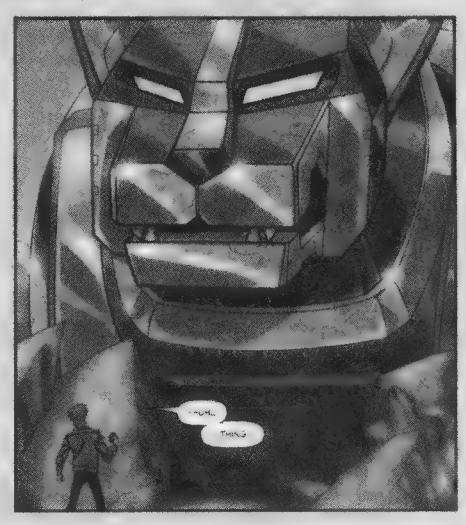
Exiles #35

PRO	CON
Sunfire's empathy for Johnny.	What makes The Exiles tick?

GRADE: C+

www.marvel.com

SERIES SPOTLIGHT



Voltron #0-4 — Image

$2.95@, color, 32 pgs.@, except #0, $2.50, 24 pgs., avail. now
Writer: Dan Jolley
Artist: Mike Norton, Clint Hilinski, Clayton Brown

Who's a fan of *Voltron*? They're out there but don't appear to be as numerous as fans of many other nostalgia properties.

Thundercats ran for two years with a Marvel imprint. *Masters of the Universe* enjoyed more than a year, not to mention an earlier DC mini-series and an adaptation of the motion picture. *Voltron* had a three-issue mini-series from Modern Comics.

History seems to be repeating itself, as the former two series have returned to comics in fairly ongoing projects (*Thundercats* being a series of limited series), while *Voltron* is a five-issue limited series.

Voltron differs from the other retro-series in good ways and not-so-good ways. Unlike the others, it hasn't taken its source material to the next level. (Making Orko cool is a significant achievement!) But it is probably more accessible to newcomers in general and particularly kids.

The story is essentially an expanded retelling of Voltron's origin. It seems to follow the generally established continuity but with greater detail. Fans might consider it gospel or heresy. As a non-fan, it strikes me as a fairly standard Japanese science team-giant robot story. (Speaking of the robot Voltron, it's been five issues, and they still haven't assembled the big guy!)

Voltron #0-4

PRO	CON
Nice pacing.	Run of the mill.

On the plus side, Jolley has an excellent sense of story pacing and ends every issue on a spine-tingler.

The art in the #0 issue is edgier but makes the characters seem less likable.

GRADE C+

Jack Abramowitz

www.imagecomics.com

READING ROOM REPORT CARD

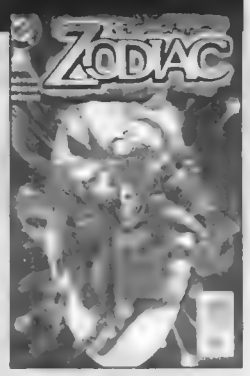
From CBG #1563 and #1564

Acredale Kolor Komics Kollection	B
Batman Advs.: Dangerous Dames	A
Boneyard Vol. 2	B
Boys over Flowers Vol. 2	B
Cursed #1	C
Doctor Octopus: Negative Exposure	A-
Drawing on Your Nightmares	B
Fables: The Last Castle	A-
Gobler Toys	A+
Gotham Central #6-10	A-
.hack/Legend of the Twilight	B
Human Target #2	A
icandy #1	B
JLA-Z #1	C
Manga Mania Villains	C
Megaman #1	A-
Mickey Mouse & Friends #257	B
Nextworld	B
Ninja High School Annual #15	C
Paper Biscuit: Half Life	B+
The Punisher #33	B+
Ruse #23	A
Suicide Blonde Book 1	C
Super-Hero Happy Hour #1-3	B+
Transformers: G.I. Joe #1	C+
Treehouse of Horror #9	A
Tuxedo Gin Vol. 2	B
Two-Step #1	A
Wake the Dead #1	A-

COMICS GUIDE

By Maggie Thompson

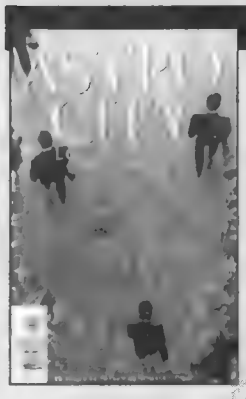
Reign of the Zodiac #1-2 DC



Keith Giffen, Colleen Doran, Bob Wiacek, color, 32 pgs. @, $2.75 @, available now.

Readers will find this ongoing fantasy series so complex that they will want to reread it at least twice in order to grasp the intricacies of the relationships involved. It's a universe in which family lines of aristocrats are combined to form political alliances — and in which lovers must face dangers to find a life together. Promoted as "a sprawling new series" and "an original science-fiction cosmology teeming with warriors, nobles, knaves, heroes, damned fools, and a war that's coming to Earth ... tomorrow," it's as complex as such a description would indicate. It begins on a planet that's Earth's twin and quickly plunges the reader into the histories of the two worlds and then on planet Eidolon itself, as a hostile, royal couple prepare for a marriage that neither wants. Doran's art, as ever, is gorgeous, never opting for an easy angle if a complex one is more exciting or intriguing. It's not a simple work, but Giffen has been preparing this intricate work for some time — and the exciting story is just beginning. Don't miss the start. www.dccomics.com

Astro City: Local Heroes #1-4 (of 5) DC



Kurt Busiek, Brent E. Anderson, color, 32, $2.95@, available now.

Astro City has been published in a series of story arcs since its inception in 1995. Plagued at times by Busiek's health problems, the frequency has been erratic, but recently, readers have been overjoyed to find frequent issues. And overjoyed is the word, because Busiek has a way with super-hero stories that few can match and almost none surpass. The humanity of the citizens living in a world in which super-heroes are numerous tends to be stories' focus — and Busiek makes the reader *care* about each character. Think it's easy?

Of how many other creators' work can that be said? Each character? Wow. The first three are stand-alones, each focusing on a different average person, each coming to terms with the super-heroes they will never be. The fourth is the first part of a two-parter addressing how the legal system would be affected by the existence of super-beings. Each is compelling, "must" reading for any fan of the art form. And the most memorable of the four stories for super-guy fans? Easily, #2, Busiek's take on Lois Lane. www.dccomics.com, www.wildstorm.com

Action Comics #801-807 DC

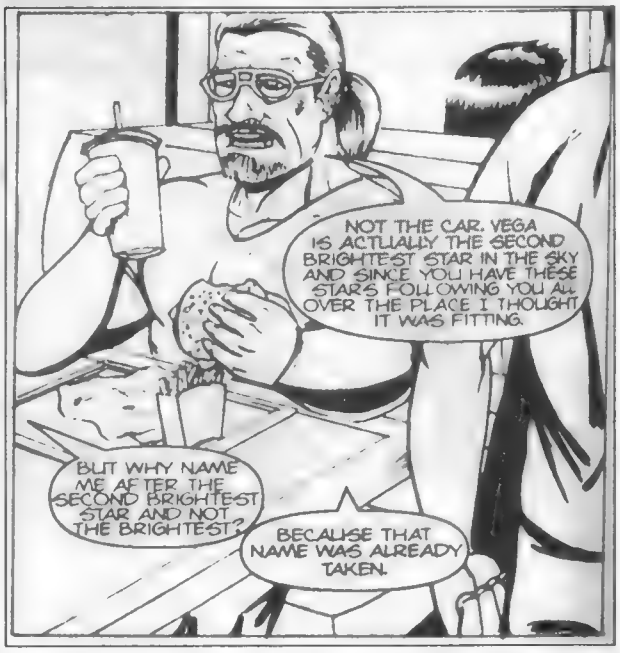
Joe Kelly, Tom Raney, Walden Wong, Tom Derenick, Bob Petrecca, Norm Rapmund, Pascual Ferry, Cam Smith, Karl Kerschl, color, 32-40pgs. @, $2.25 @, available now.

CBG ran a series spotlight on the series in #1561, which took several steps back and evaluated *Action* from the sort of standpoint applied to many other series. Of course, the approach was lighthearted, but *Action* is still a pivotal series. With a cover design aimed at shop placement with the other titles in the Superman family, the stories still stand on their own. After the double-sized "anniversary issue" of #800, the series continued with "The Harvest," a startling plot development, with one in every 1,000 Americans triggering into metahumans — with alarming consequences. How to deal with super-human traits that appeared overnight was a puzzler, and Kelly handled it appealingly, with sympathies for the new morphed people and a major problem for Superman to solve. The problem turned out to be worse, including the change of Earth's sun to red. Battles, metahumans, *etc.* — and a question of nurture vs. nature was raised. With #806, the "Supergirls" arc began abruptly, jumping from Lana Lang Ross to "novice sorceress" Traci Thirteen, "hungry ghost" Natasha Irons, and "Supergirl." Art is always attractive, and the stories work well. www.dccomics.com

Eclipse and Vega #1 SSS Comics

$2.95, b/w, 36 pgs., available now
Writer: Saul Colt; Artist: Guy Abergel
reviewed by **Jack Abramowitz**

The cover looks like the debut issue of "Ms. Mystic and Power Girl," but the insides leave no room for this error.


NOT THE CAR. VEGA IS ACTUALLY THE SECOND BRIGHTEST STAR IN THE SKY AND SINCE YOU HAVE THESE STARS FOLLOWING YOU ALL OVER THE PLACE I THOUGHT IT WAS FITTING.
BUT WHY NAME ME AFTER THE SECOND BRIGHTEST STAR AND NOT THE BRIGHTEST?
BECAUSE THAT NAME WAS ALREADY TAKEN.

Eclipse and Vega is a competently rendered but unexceptional super-hero comic book featuring two bimbos who are more about what's in their bras than in their brains. When they're not wearing the Spandex, it's mini-dresses and bikinis galore.

Their origin is a Marvel cliché, but this is playfully acknowledged by the women's mentor, Dennis Colt, a retired super-hero. Oddly, Colt did not wear a blue suit and gloves (and no socks); he was the bizarrely named "Packaging Man." This is because Dennis Colt is not named for The Spirit; he is named for creator Colt's father (who, one would guess, worked in the packaging business?).

A plus: Canada needs more indigenous super-heroes. A minus: the characters occasionally speak in an unnatural, stilted fashion, eschewing contractions where normal people would use them. (A mini-minus: a ~~really overt~~ plug for a Cole's comics shop smack dab in the middle of the story, but that's understandable.)

Make no mistake: *Eclipse and Vega* is fun. It's wholesome despite the occasionally gratuitous art. (It's not much more risqué than your average issue of *Betty and Veronica*.) But it's also full of clichés. Acknowledging the clichés takes the edge off, perhaps, but they're still clichés.

Eclipse and Vega #1

PRO	CON
Not bad, *per se.*	Not much original.

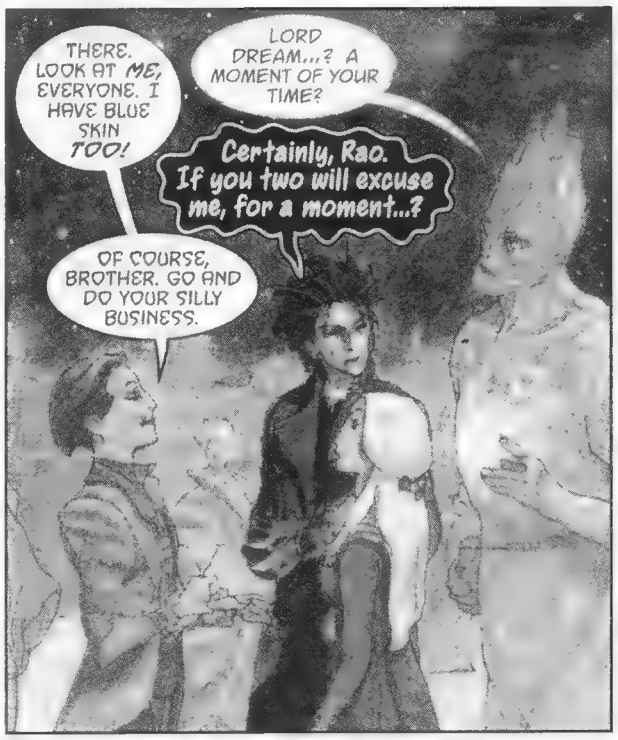
GRADE: C

www.ssscomics.com

The Sandman: Endless Nights DC/Vertigo

$24.95, color, 160 pgs., available now
Writer: Neil Gaiman
Artists: P. Craig Russell, Milo Manara, Bill Sienkiewicz, Miguelanxo Prado, Barron Storey, Glenn Fabry, Frank Quitely
reviewed by **Jim Johnson**

Marvel *1602*? Bah. *Sandman: The Dream Hunters*? Pish posh. As great as these projects are, *this* is the one that Gaiman fans have been enduring their own


THERE. LOOK AT ME, EVERYONE. I HAVE BLUE SKIN TOO!
LORD DREAM...? A MOMENT OF YOUR TIME?
Certainly, Rao. If you two will excuse me, for a moment...?
OF COURSE, BROTHER. GO AND DO YOUR SILLY BUSINESS.

endless nights over: a reunion among Gaiman, Morpheus and his six siblings, and seven of the industry's best artists.

After the ongoing *Sandman* series ended in 1996, Gaiman stated that he would return to write The Endless again when the mood struck him. Which he did, three years later, with the aforementioned *Dream Hunters* illustrated novel, an enchanting and beautifully rendered "Japanese fairytale." But here Gaiman returns to the more familiar sequential storytelling format, just as he returns to his most famous characters.

The book is divided into seven stand-alone stories, one each for Dream, Death, Delirium, and the other alliterative family members, and a different artist superbly renders each. And every one is a typical Gaiman masterpiece. But the best is, logically, the story of a young Morpheus, when celestial forces meet at the dawn of the universe. There's even a tie-in to DC universe continuity, and it's lushly painted by Prado.

And there's Destruction's fascinating story about an unusual archaeological dig, the story pencilled and inked by Fabry; Sienkiewicz constructs a textured collage about a heartwarming story of psychological rescue featuring Delirium; Russell does his pastel thing with Death on an island lost in time, *etc.*

Sandman: Endless Nights

PRO	CON
Gaiman's Sandman, what else?	It's a one-time deal.

GRADE: A

Every story, every page, every panel is a work of beauty. This book is pure magic, Gaiman is at his best, and it's a stark but satisfying reminder that his Sandman has been truly missed, even though Gaiman's remained active. Welcome back, Neil. Seeya in *1602*.

www.dccomics.com
ISBN 1-4012-0089-3

Knuckles the Malevolent Nun Vol. 1 Antipodes

$19.95, b/w, 160 pgs., available now
Writers and artists: Cornelius Stone, Roger Langridge
reviewed by **Jack Abramowitz**

Plenty of comics have taken a swipe at organized religion, from gentle prodding to overt blasphemy. There have been battle popes and fire-breathing popes, warrior nuns and nuns with guns, magic priests and even a priest who goes "bamf." (Why is it always the Catholic church? Where are the ministers, rabbis, imams, and Sufis?)

Knuckles the Malevolent Nun is not offensive because she's a nun. It's not even because she's malevolent. It's because she's disgusting. Totally vile. Utterly repulsive. Synonyms fail. She would be equally foul even if she were not in the clergy.

Which is a shame, because Stone and Langridge are talented. They have a clever sense of humor (you've got to love robot artist Salvadore Dalek) and they draw dead-on parodies of strips from *Peanuts* to *Calvin and Hobbes*.

A lot of the pieces refer to local New Zealand news, but the endnotes are helpful. They also tell you which copyright-infringed characters have been altered for this book. Witchbite, the penguin angel, is one of the best characters in the strip, but, according to the notes, the creators don't even like him. Go figure.

The best pieces are not the one-page gross-outs that occupy the first half, but the fuller stories that are in the second half. If *Knuckles* intrigues you but feces and pus are not your idea of a good time, start reading around Page 86.

Knuckles the Malevolent Nun

PRO	CON
Pages 86-160.	Most of pages 1-85.

GRADE: C

homepage.mac.com/hotelfred/knuckles.html

THE REVIEW CREW

Brent Frankenhoff

Managing editor of ***Comics Buyer's Guide***, Brent manages this rotating circle of ***CBG*** Review Crew writers. In between, he finds time for reviews.
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Jack Abramowitz

Jack is the administrator of a national youth movement. He's been collecting comics for 30 years and writing about them for 10.
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Jim Johnson

Jim has been a fan of mainstream, independent, and alternative comics for longer than he cares to admit and has given a mental review to each and every comic book in his collection.
E-mail Jim at: JimsReview@Yahoo.com

Brett Weiss

A former owner of Fantastic Comics & Cards, Brett has collected comics for almost three decades. He is now a full-time freelancer, writing reviews.
Review copies to 6537 Moonglow Ln., Watauga, TX 76148.

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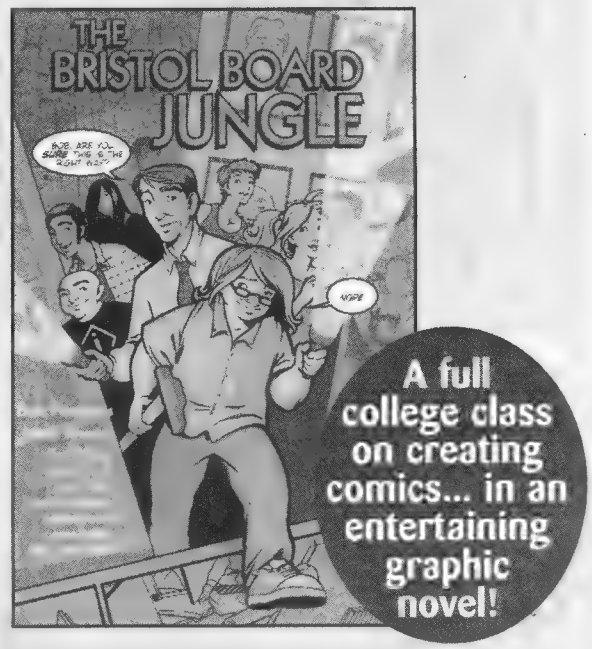

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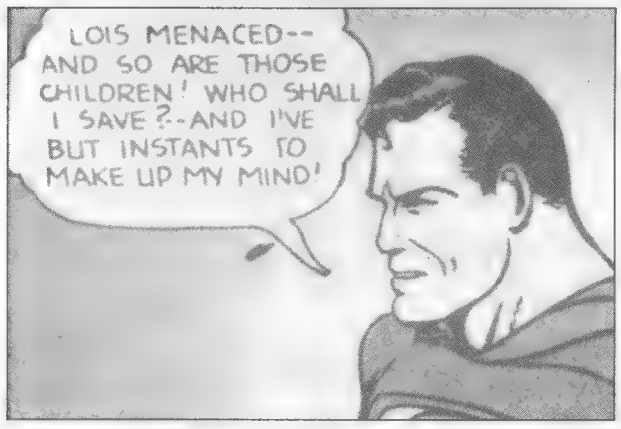
Writers: Jerry Siegel, Bill Finger, William M. Marston, Jack Cole; Artists: Wayne Boring, Bob Kane, H.G. Peter, Cole
reviewed by **Brett Weiss**

This is basically an advertisement for DC's spectacular *Archives* series, but with four complete stories for less than a buck, it's hard to pass up — especially for fans of Golden Age material who can't afford to fork over $50 a pop for the hardcover collections (much less the fortune it would take to purchase original copies of the comics themselves). The reprinted tales include a story apiece from *Superman* #6, *Batman* #5, *Sensation Comics* #11 (starring Wonder Woman), and *Police Comics* #11 (starring Plastic Man).



The package is educational as well as entertaining. Those largely unfamiliar with comics of the era will learn of the fun (if clunky and naïve) story-telling skills of such legends as Jerry Siegel and Bill Finger, the ahead-of-their-time renderings of the great Jack Cole, the smooth artistry of H.G. Peter, and the fetishistic quirkiness of psychologist-turned-writer William Moulton Marston. (Wonder Woman's astral body travels to the planet Eros, where people love bondage and prison.)

Modern readers will marvel at the differences between the original versions of these characters and their present-day counterparts. For example, in his early comic-book years, Superman leaped about from place to place (as opposed to flying, which was introduced in *The Adventures of Superman* radio program), and Bruce Wayne and Dick Grayson lived in an apartment (as opposed to stately Wayne Manor).

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PRO	CON
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GRADE: A-

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Venture #4 — Image

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Writer: Jay Faerber; Artist: Jamal Igle
reviewed by **Jack Abramowitz**

It's a shame that this Venture never really took flight.

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OK, I think you get the point. Venture was just another Superman knock-off. As such, people may not have given him enough of a chance. This is a shame, because he had points to recommend him.

The best aspect of the series was that Venture didn't want to be a public figure. He was blackmailed into the role by Reggie, his Jimmy Olsen figure. That right there gives the title an angle that hasn't been done to death in previous series.

This issue focuses on Venture's self-proclaimed arch-enemy, who also has a motivation different than that of the usual Luthors and Sivanas.

Reggie seems to show the promise of redemption in this issue, but the series ends on a note of potential upheaval. Will we ever get to see what happens next? Here's hoping!

Venture #4

Heating up.	Moot.

GRADE: B+

Celeste from *Noble Causes* guest-stars in this issue, for whatever crossover power that carries.

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A look back at DC's universe-changing maxi-series!
Retroviews, Page 32

The creators, characters, and series people are STILL talking about today!

FLASHBACK

15 years ago

"Some people have secret identities ... Some just have secrets," announced the DC ad for *Black Orchid* by **Neil Gaiman** and **Dave McKean**. The three-issue series in DC's prestige format introduced the team to DC readers when its first issue shipped in November 1988.

20 years ago

Grimjack by **John Ostrander** and **Tim Truman** first appeared in Pacific Comics' *Starslayer* #10 (Nov 83); the SF character went on to appear in his own title from First Comics.

25 years ago

Avon Books published *The Very First Shoe Book* (Nov 78), a collection of the strip by Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist **Jeff MacNelly**.

30 years ago

Batman met The Shadow in "Who Knows What Evil?" in DC's *Batman* #253 (Nov 73).

40 years ago

A New York townhouse owned by millionaire industrialist Anthony Stark became the headquarters of The Avengers in the second issue of the team's title (Nov 63).

50 years ago

Greg Theakston, head of Pure Imagination Publishing, is not only an artist and editor; he developed a process for removing color from comics pages so as to prepare them for reprint editions. The developer of "Theakstonizing" was born Nov. 21, 1953.

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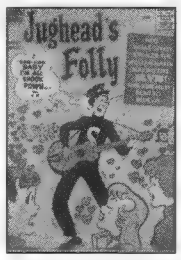
Jughead's folly

He was all shook up in a rare one-shot

By **Michelle Nolan**

One of the scarcest of all mass-market Elvis Presley collectibles is an Archie Series comic book few collectors have seen, much less read.



Jughead's Folly, an ironic title considering that it apparently did not sell well, hit the stands during the late summer of 1957, just as the nation's teen-agers were becoming "all shook up" over Elvis the Pelvis, along with many of their parents and grandparents.

The bold cover blurb read like this: 'Hey! What gives! Jughead the woman-hater making like Elvis! This you must read to believe!" This, indeed, was true, what with the image of Jughead playing his guitar and singing "Ooo-hoo baby, I'm all shook down ..."

"First Issue" was prominently emblazoned on the garish yellow cover and "No. 1" was listed in the indicia, so it's uncertain whether the Archie Series folks intended to follow up, especially since this issue seems like a natural one-shot. (This issue is not to be confused with the three-issue run of *Jughead's Fantasy* in 1960.)

House ads for *Jughead's Folly* ran in the Archie line in October 1957 issues, including *Jughead* #44. However, *Jughead's Folly* wasn't the first comic book with a mention of Elvis; that honor apparently goes to Charlton's *Young Love* #18 (May 1957), which featured a cover photo and text feature about Elvis.

The 30-page, five-part story in *Jughead's Folly* did not mention Elvis, but the story didn't have to, so obvious was the satire. This one-shot, an oddity for the Archie Series at the time, must have been produced quickly to take advantage of the exponentially increasing popularity of Elvis. He had made only two movies by the time this issue came out — *Love Me Tender* (which premiered in November 1956) and *Loving You*, which was released in July 1957, probably not long before *Jughead's Folly* appeared.

Elvis thus had been a national figure for less than two years at the time *Jughead's Folly* was released. His initial recording session for RCA, his first national record label, was held shortly after he turned 21 on Jan. 8, 1956, to be followed throughout the year by his earliest national television appearances. It's difficult to believe that it has been nearly half a century since Elvis first swiveled and sang on television!

Jailhouse Rock, the movie that really catapulted Elvis to immortality, was released in October 1957. It's even possible that *Jughead's Folly* came out a bit too early to take advantage of *Jailhouse Rock*, but that also may have been why the Archie folks did not put a date on either the cover or inside, other than the 1957 copyright date.

In *The Elvis Catalog* (1987) by Lee Cotten — a history and price guide bulging with hundreds of images of Elvis memorabilia — neither *Jughead's Folly* nor *Young Lovers* #18 was pictured on a page with a cutline entitled "Elvis Presley in comic books." Instead, Charlton's *Career Girl Romances* #32 and *I Love You* #60 (both dated January 1966) were pictured. "Elvis never had his own comic book, though Ricky Nelson did," the caption noted.

Indeed, the recently released second edition of *The Standard Catalog of Comic Books* assigns *Jughead's Folly* a Near Mint value of $120. The *Gerber Photo-Journal* gives it a scarcity rating of 7, meaning 20 to 50 copies may exist. To date, only three copies have been graded by CGC, with the highest graded 5.0. There is no question this issue is uncommon at best.

Jughead's Folly may have presented the longest Archie story published to that point in the history of the Archie family (and still one of the longest, for that matter). At 30 pages, it was an Archie Series anomaly.

But then, an Archie Series one-shot was an anomaly at the time. *Jughead's Folly*, in fact, was the first one-shot involving the Archie characters,

Interestingly, this tale of Jughead à la Elvis turned out to be an "imaginary story," since it turned out that Jughead dreamed it all, well before DC began churning out those type of tales.

Jughead, depressed because the Archie gang had called him a "nobody" for various reasons, started singing the blues in Pop Tate's Choklit Shoppe, where a self-proclaimed "famous talent agent" named Mayka Starr just happened to be on hand to hear our favorite woman hater.

Eventually, however, the drawbacks of being a celebrity — especially being forced to watch his diet and eschew hamburger — depressed Juggy so much that he hatched a plan involving reverse psychology. He decided to tell the world that he "loved all girls" and was not a woman-hater after all. But when he stopped playing hard to get, the girls decided he wasn't worth chasing and he lost his celebrity status.

After Jughead returned to his old haunts in Riverside, happy to be a nobody again, he wound up impressing Veronica's uncle, a genuine talent scout, on the last page of this little epic. "No thank you! Absolutely not!" Jughead told him. "I'm happy being just what I am ... a nobody!"

There's actually a touching lesson about being happy to be yourself contained in this story. If you can find a copy of *Jughead's Folly*, you would do well to snap up this nifty little piece of Americana. And, with the 50th anniversary of Elvis coming up, it certainly wouldn't be a folly. ✦

INSIDE THIS SECTION

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Known for The Shadow

Artist William M. Kaluta has done other things, honest!

CATCHING UP WITH
William M. Kaluta

By **George Nelson**

By his own admission, William Michael Kaluta is best known for drawing a handful of comics three decades ago.

"It's kind of strange," he reflected at a convention this year. "As somebody pointed out this weekend, I'm sitting behind a table signing books because I did five comic books one time. It's just not like most of these fellows that do at least 20 if not 60 comics in the same series."

However, those five comics represented one of the classic collaborations of the 1970s, DC's version of the famous pulp character, The Shadow.

After assisting Al Williamson, Kaluta got work from DC, sometimes assisting Bernie Wrightson. Landing the *Shadow* assignment was a textbook case of being in the right place at the right time. He was hanging out in a copy room in DC's building with a friend, Steve Harper, when Denny O'Neill entered the room.

He and some others were discussing the new Shadow book DC was about to publish.

"The problem was they couldn't find anybody at that moment to draw The Shadow comic book that had been advertised," he recalled. "My friend Harper pushed me into saying that I could do it. I didn't think I could."

Kaluta volunteered and soon after got the nod.

"The most significant event in my life was the first issue of *The Shadow* because I was just a journeyman cartoonist," he said. "I wasn't ready to do it but I did it and it threw me into this big pool I didn't have the fins to swim in yet."

Not long after receiving the assignment, Kaluta began to receive copious Shadow material — not from DC, but from Shadow fans who wanted to make sure the character was portrayed correctly.

"I know we were pleased when we did the book. It was not a pure Shadow but it was as pure as it could be, at least for DC Comics, and surprising in a few places," he said. "We were happy with it and I know that the Shadow fans were happy with it."

The assignment didn't last long. Kaluta said he missed deadline "very badly" early in the run, necessitating a fill-in. "It turns out I was just working too slow — screwed up basically — so they took the thing away," he said. The sixth issue was Kaluta's final one.

Despite the brevity of the run, Kaluta's *Shadow* work unquestionably is the work for which he is best known.

He and O'Neill would collaborate again on the character for the *The Shadow: Hitler's Astrologer* graphic novel, published in the late 1980s by Marvel. As Kaluta recalled, Marvel had acquired the graphic novel rights,— an 18-month contract — between the end of the DC series by Andy Helfer and Bill Sienkiewicz, and *The Shadow Strikes!* book that followed.

"Denny had found out they had it only five months before the end of the contract. So I got to work on the thing and I was a good ways into the pencilling when the contract was going to lapse, so a deal was struck between Marvel and DC," he said, crediting DC's Paul Levitz for allowing Marvel to go ahead with the graphic novel even though DC was doing the monthly. "It was kind of a good will thing between the two companies. I was glad to be a part of that, to be sure."

Kaluta wasn't as pleased with the big-screen adaptation of the pulp character a few years back. Having read the script in advance, he told the producer that the script wasn't as good as it could have been.

"The movie was all about Shiwan Khan because he did all the cool stuff," he said. For the Dark Horse Comics adaptation, he and the others working on it placed the emphasis back on The Shadow and his alter ego, Lamont Cranston.

Nowadays, Kaluta continues to occasionally work in comics, including covers. *Echoes: The Drawings of Michael William Kaluta*, a collection of his work, was published not long ago. He also has done work for trading-card games and does a lot of private commissions, including Tolkien characters, The Spectre, Madame Xanadu, and, naturally, The Shadow. ✦

IN BRIEF ...

Oni releases *Killer Princesses*

Oni Press has announced that it will collect writer Gail Simone and artist Leah Hernandez's *Killer Princesses* in a digest-sized, 104-page trade paperback in January for $9.95

The trade collects the original mini-series and feature an introduction by Mark Waid, plus a new illustrated prose story by the creators. According to editor James Lucas Jones, the story follows sorority sisters Hope, Faith, and Charity as they hit the books ... "and henchmen and gangsters and government agents and anything else that gets in their way.

"Before Gail wowed fans with her take on certain DC's *Birds of Prey*, there were the Princesses. Gail had an established fanbase with her *Yabs!* column and had already broken into the biz with work for Bongo, but these three girls gave her an opportunity to really let loose. In *Killer Princesses* there are no rules and there are no limits. It's rare for a creator as fresh as Gail was at the time to be given a playground with zero boundaries, but she took full advantage of the opportunity to do something totally outrageous."

"Leah and I had been friends and mutual admirers for a while when she approached me about collaborating," Simone said. "She'd already stretched her resumé with the hard-hitting *Rumble Girls*, but I wanted to take it a step beyond and really do something that could showcase her abilities as both a cutie-pie artist and a brutal action storyteller."

BIRTHDAYS and INDUSTRY EVENTS

Mon 3 NOV

CBG #1566 ships

Born on this date:
Susan Ehrenreich
Holly M. Sanfelippo (1953) – **50** years ago
Tom Grindberg (1961)
Mike Pascal (1963) – **40** years ago
Carlos Kastro (1966)
Aaron Sowd (1970)

Tue 4 NOV

Born on this date:
Anthony Burcher (1959)

Wed 5 NOV

Born on this date:
Jim Steranko (1938) – **65** years ago
Ron Fortier (1946)
Paul S. Power (1954)
Robert Loren Fleming (1956)

New Comics Day! Scheduled to ship:

Dark Horse: *Oh My Goddess!* #103

DC: *Action Comics* #809, *Detective Comics* #788, *Hawkman* #21, *Tom Strong* #23

Image: *Blokhedz* #1, *Cloudfall* #1

Marvel: *New Mutants* #7, *Spider-Girl* #66, *Supreme Power* #4, *Wolverine* #7

Thu 6 NOV

Born on this date:
Marty Garrity (1916)
Mike Reynolds (1954)

Fri 7 NOV

Born on this date:
Tom Taggart (1965)
Vincent Locke (1966)

Sat 8 NOV

Born on this date:
Roger McKenzie
Marilee Woch (1964)

Sun 9 NOV

Born on this date:
Bill Mantlo
Phil Normand (1945)
Ken Landgraf (1950)
Mort Todd (1961)
Jack Herman (1961)
Patrick Hayes (1967)

Ripples in the Time Pool

The Atom's time-traveling device was a hit with fans — at least, some of them

By **Craig Shutt**

Dear Mr. Silver Age,

I've always been a big fan of The Atom's Time Pool, which I've been reading about in the ***Archives*** *volumes. How many trips did he make during The Silver Age, and how were they received by fans?*

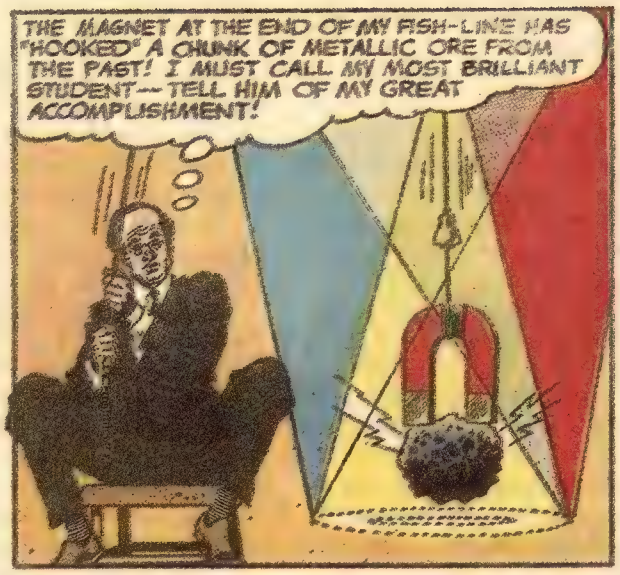
Rip H.
Northern California

Mr. Silver Age says: The Atom took eight dives into The Time Pool during the Silver Age, Rip, and the first four are on view in *Atom Archives* #1 (*The Atom* #3) and #2 (#6, #9, and #12). What those volumes *don't* reveal (besides the final four trips) is the reaction from fans — and it covered the spectrum. That's probably only to be expected from a back-up series based on a quirky gimmick that lent itself to going off the deep end, so to speak.

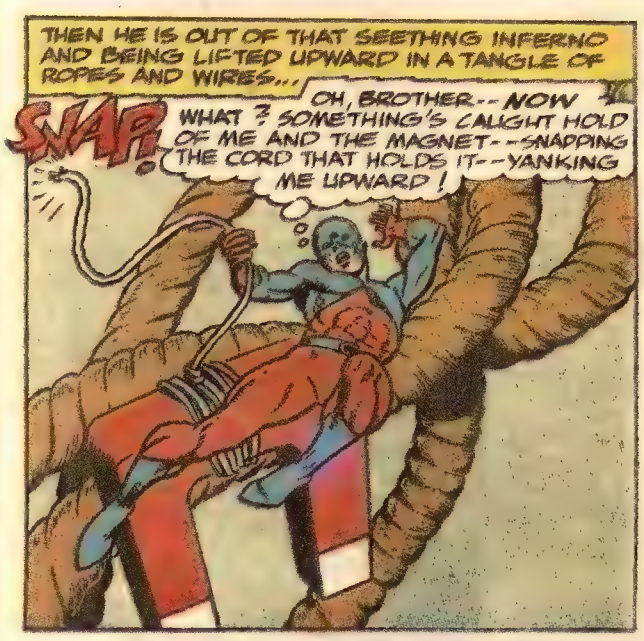
The adventures began with "The Secret of Al-Atom's Lamp!" in *The Atom* #3 (Oct-Nov 62), as retired Ivy University Professor Alpheus V. Hyatt fine-tuned his Time Pool. If you're thinking that "Alpheus V. Hyatt" is a pretty wacky comic-book name, he was named after Alpheus Hyatt Verrill, one of Editor Julius Schwartz's favorite science-fiction writers.

Hyatt told Ray Palmer that The Time Pool worked by combining all light colors into "a pool of absolute whiteness." Somehow, this whiteness pierced the time barrier! Whatever you say, Professor; it's not the strangest comic-book science I've ever heard. On second thought, I take that back.

Ray was a bit dubious, too, so he rode along as The Atom when the prof next dropped his magnet-retriever into the pool. Upon arriving in ancient Arabia, Atom untied the magnet to ensure it didn't return without him. What happened to the end of the string isn't quite explained, but I'd turned my brain off a few panels back,


THE MAGNET AT THE END OF MY FISH-LINE HAS "HOOKED" A CHUNK OF METALLIC ORE FROM THE PAST! I MUST CALL MY MOST BRILLIANT STUDENT--TELL HIM OF MY GREAT ACCOMPLISHMENT!

Professor Alpheus V. Hyatt tested his pure-white Time Pool and latched onto metallic ore in* The Atom *#3.


THEN HE IS OUT OF THAT SEETHING INFERNO AND BEING LIFTED UPWARD IN A TANGLE OF ROPES AND WIRES...
SNAP!
OH, BROTHER--NOW WHAT? SOMETHING'S CAUGHT HOLD OF ME AND THE MAGNET--SNAPPING THE CORD THAT HOLDS IT--YANKING ME UPWARD!

The Atom's return ride was left hanging high and dry over Paris in 1783, when a hot-air balloon intervened in* The Atom *#27.

anyway.

With only 9fi pages to work with, the story definitely found a creative way to expand The Atom's often-mundane adventures. Some positive reactions were printed in *The Atom* #5 (Feb-Mar 63), leading Julie to note that the "favorable" response meant another story would appear next issue.

"The Highwayman and the Mighty Mite" not only appeared in *The Atom* #6 (Apr-May 63), it was cover-featured — the only Time Pool story achieving that distinction. It was still the back-up feature, but it expanded to 12 pages. This time, the history was a little more precise, as it involved 1800s highwayman Dick Turpin.

The story was replete with period costumes, props, language, and historical bits, giving us kids a chance to learn all sorts of stuff, like the vocabulary word "heath," that Handel wrote "Music for the Royal Fireworks" in 1749, and such goofy exclamations as "Od's Fish!" OK, so they weren't all *useful* facts. We even learned what happened to Dick Turpin, aka Tom Palmer (no relation, I'm sure, to either Ray or the famed comics inker).

This story, too, was well-received, but one fan complained about the slipshod history, which didn't jibe with Dick Turpin's real downfall. "I expect better things from you than the run-of-the-mill time-travel tales in which the comic generally makes a shambles of history," scolded E. Nelson Bridwell of Oklahoma City, Okla., in

CARRIED ALONG BY THAT FLAILING SACK, THE WORLD'S SMALLEST SUPER-HERO SOLIDIFIES HIS FREE FIST JUST IN TIME TO...
A DWARF!? I MUST BE DREAMIN'!
NOT YET, PAL! BUT YOU WILL BE AFTER THIS SOCK SENDS YOU INTO DREAMLAND!
SOK!

A red-headed Mohock in 1752 found words (like "dwarf") failed him when he ran into The Atom in #21.

The Atom #8 (Aug-Sep 63). "Please avoid such pitfalls in your refreshingly different 'Time Pool' stories."

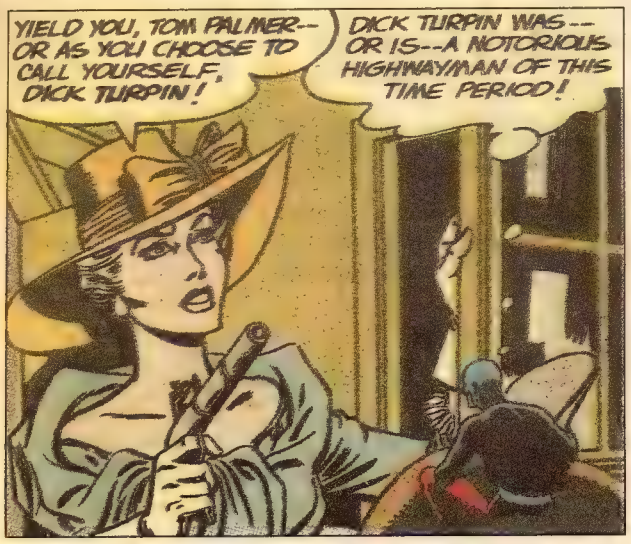
Julie let the jibe pass, noting only that another Time Pool story — "well off the beaten path of history" would be forthcoming. Bridwell, of course, would soon put his money where his mouth was, joining DC as an assistant editor and becoming one of the most beloved editors in comics, particularly for his selections for reprint collections.

That forthcoming story arrived in #9 as "The Seaman and the Spyglass!" and added a truly wacky element to the pool. In the first adventure, Hyatt's pool dunking was hit or miss. In the second, he could maintain contact with a particular date, once arriving. By this third trip, he had so perfected time-traveling that he and Ray chose a year at random.

The Atom wound up in The Netherlands, where he just happened to meet Jan Lippershey, inventor of the telescope. Amazingly enough, The Mighty Mite arrived just as Jan was learning how a telescope worked. Imagine that. The Atom then met Henry Hudson, one of the few historic figures to learn of The Atom's existence, and they all had a merry adventure, as Henry prepared to sail to the new world.

This tale received criticism in *The Atom* #11, balancing the compliment that also appeared. "Stories which depict some super-hero helping history stay on course is just too unrealistic for me," said Robert Malisani of Toronto.

Julie replied, "Despite the rather 'time-worn' theme of having a present-day character involved in events of the past, most of our readers never seem to tire of it and keep asking for more. Concerning The Atom's adventures in the Time Pool, there's one thing you can count


YIELD YOU, TOM PALMER-- OR AS YOU CHOOSE TO CALL YOURSELF, DICK TURPIN!
DICK TURPIN WAS-- OR IS--A NOTORIOUS HIGHWAYMAN OF THIS TIME PERIOD!

The Mighty Mite aided the luscious Lady Jane de la Mare when she tried to trap the highwayman Dick Turpin in ***The Atom*** *#6.*

on — they'll steer clear of overly famous historical events and overworked historical celebrities."

But, of course, they wouldn't steer *completely* clear of historical celebrities, because that would minimize the fun — as Julie proved in the next issue, #12 (Apr-May 64), when The Atom teamed with Edgar Allan Poe in Baltimore to become "The Gold Hunters of '49!" This time, the prof tried to fine-tune the *space* coordinates of the pool — as if it hadn't been enough to drop in on Arabia, England, and The Netherlands at precisely the spot for a historically significant moment!

This adventure pleased three of the four letter-writers in *The Atom* #14 (Aug-Sep 64), including Bob Butts of South Bend, Ind., an avowed Poe fan, who praised the story for not making The Atom a key part of history. But critic Malisani was back to complain that he was becoming "violently opposed" to the series. "You chose a poor sub-hero in Edgar Allan Poe," he wrote. "For this man was in real life a drinker, a sadistic forlorn figure; quite unlike the impression you gave of him. (Nevertheless, I loved his stories)." Julie, again, didn't rise to the bait, only noting that fans' opinions differed on the story.

It took a while for The Atom to dive back into The Time Pool, since it didn't reappear until #17 (Feb-Mar 65). This time, The Atom traveled to 1898 Nantes, France, where he just happened to run into Jules Verne and become embroiled in a battle over the crystal ball of Michel de Notredame — aka Nostradamus.

This story received a big thumbs-up from fans in *The Atom* #19 (Jun-Jul 65). "The Time Pool story was brilliant," wrote Sal Iacopelli of Boonton, N.J. Some guy named Marvin Wolfman of Flushing, N.Y., agreed. He praised it to the skies but decided the quality didn't derive from the quirkiness of time-travel stories, their educational nature, or the action-packed plots. "I guess the only, or at least, main reason, is the way they're written," said the future comics writer. "In The Time Pool stories, The Atom is faced with a realistic situation and must match it using himself and no modern weapons."

"The Time Pool story in the March issue did indeed win overwhelming praise," Julie modestly noted.

The Time Pool rippled again in *The Atom* #21 (Oct-Nov 65), gaining a cover blurb. The story led Ray Palmer to "The Adventure of the Canceled Birthday!" Said birthday was for 5-year-old Theodore Hyatt, Alf's ancestor, in 1752 England. Professor Hyatt wised up and sent a movie camera into the past rather than a magnet — but his camera showed no party evidence.

The reason, The Atom learned, wasn't that the party was held in another room, house, or city, but because, in 1752, England revised its calendar and eliminated 11 days, including Hyatt's ancestor's birthday. What a coincidence! Even more fortuitiuosly, The Atom met John Fielding and his brother Henry, author of *Tom Jones*, who wasn't all that surprised to find himself talking to a six-inch-tall man.

The fans decided, in *The Atom* #23 (Feb-Mar 66), that this adventure "was a little less spectacular than its predecessor, but still in the Grand Old DC Tradition," as return LOC-er Iacopelli put it. But Dave Bakulski of Manchester, Conn., chastised writer Gardner Fox for choosing "a poor historical character" — *i.e.*, one with whom this fan wasn't familiar.

"When we initiated the Time Pool series we stressed our resolve to steer clear of notable — and cliché — historical personalities," Julie responded. "Surely the fact that a reader happens to be unfamiliar with someone who contributed to our culture should not bar him from a 'comeback.' If you didn't know about them before, you do now — so you've been wised up!" You tell him, Julie.

A full year passed, at least for us, before the pool resurfaced in *The Atom* #27 (Oct-Nov 66). This time, Professor Hyatt was "time-doodling," as he called randomly sticking his magnet into the pool, and he fished up fire from 1783 Paris. He was puzzled by this, apparently not figuring the chances of dropping a random magnet into a place without electricity might turn up something fairly hot.

To solve the mystery, The Atom became a "Stowaway on a Hot-Air Balloon!" upon arrival, when a balloon ripped his magnet off the string far above France. Yikes. Ray gave us a quick history of hot-air balloons and correctly guessed that his encounter was tied to a demonstration for King Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette. Sadly, the balloon was destroyed before the demonstration — a historical fact, we're assured. By an amazing coincidence, The Atom ran into Benjamin Franklin, who helped him find a way home.

Fan response, in *The Atom* #29 (Feb-Mar 67) again was mixed, with Steven Carlberg of Durant, Okla, proclaiming, "Your Time Pool stories get worse all the time, especially with the corn." On the other hand, the famous Irene Vartanoff of Bethesda, Md., called it "a beautiful story. These Time Pool flings are really terrific; please continue them forever and forever." And, when the lady known as Poison I.V. handed out a compliment, you paid attention.

David Wasinger of Kays, Kan., chastised Gil Kane for showing Ben holding his glasses by the lens, when no one who wore glasses would ever do that (yeah, right). "Looks like Ben Franklin made a be-spectacle of himself," Julie opined, indicating that the corn wasn't going anywhere.

The final Silver Age Time Pool story appeared more than a year later, in *The Atom* #35 (Feb-Mar 68), when Ray arrived in 1671 London and watched as "Col. Blood Steals the Crown Jewels!" The adventure began when Professor Hyatt's magnet returned attached to one of the crown jewels. Oops. The Atom quickly returned it, only to become involved in Col. Blood's jewel heist, a historical event with repercussions.

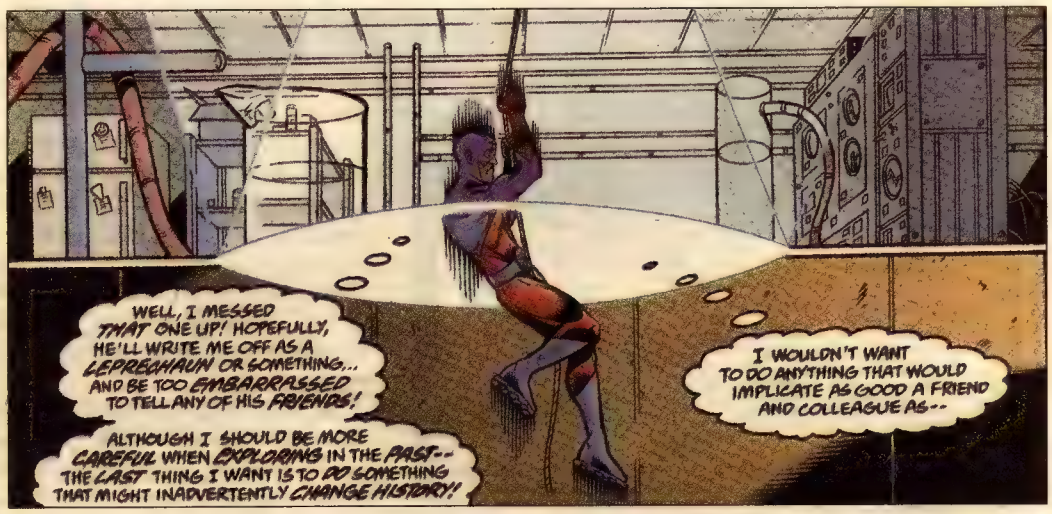
All four letter writers in *The Atom* #37 (Jun-Jul 68) agreed it was the best story in the issue — but that was damning with faint praise. David Lewin of Lomita, Calif., could bring himself to praise only the splash page, while Jeff Pierce of Stanford, Calif., decided it was "superior to the first [story in the issue], but not by too terribly much. It, too, had a great lack of plot, which was made up for by a great deal of action."

But Neil Telafor of the Bronx called it "another great success in the great tradition of Time Pool stories," and Dave Truesdale of South St. Paul, Minn., said, "I really dig these yarns and hope there will be more in the future. This one had the same high standards as set in the previous Time Pool story and was just as interesting. What won't Professor Hyatt latch onto next!"

Sadly, the prof didn't latch onto anything else in the Silver Age, as the title combined with Hawkman's series beginning with #39, and Prof. Hyatt was left in the dust. That wasn't the end of The Time Pool, of course. It made numerous later appearances, including a recent adventure in which Chronos tried to co-opt it in *Legends of the DC Universe* #40-41 (May-Jun 01).

I frankly don't know how fans responded to those later appearances; my post-Silver Age collection has a few gaps. It's possible that, by those appearances, fans were so used to time-traveling heroes that the pool's appearance didn't even make a ripple. ✦

Ask Mr. Silver Age is © 2003 by Craig Shutt. *Send all comments to* ***craigshutt@ameritech.net.***


WELL, I MESSED THAT ONE UP! HOPEFULLY, HE'LL WRITE ME OFF AS A LEPRECHAUN OR SOMETHING... AND BE TOO EMBARRASSED TO TELL ANY OF HIS FRIENDS!
I WOULDN'T WANT TO DO ANYTHING THAT WOULD IMPLICATE AS GOOD A FRIEND AND COLLEAGUE AS--
ALTHOUGH I SHOULD BE MORE CAREFUL WHEN EXPLORING IN THE PAST-- THE LAST THING I WANT IS TO DO SOMETHING THAT MIGHT INADVERTENTLY CHANGE HISTORY!

The Atom was still swimming in The Time Pool in 2001, as seen in ***Legends of the DC Universe*** *#40.*

Comic-book controversy long before Wertham

The red-hot thrill: Comic-book crisis of 1948, Part Three

Last week: *March 1948 must have been a nightmarish month for comic-book publishers, as ABC's* ***America's Town Meeting of the Air*** *discussed "What's Wrong with the Comics?" and* ***Collier's*** *featured a focus on Fredric Wertham in "Horror in the Nursery." And the Supreme Court announced its decision regarding a New York Court of Appeals decision upholding the conviction of a book dealer convicted of a law that made it a misdemeanor to sell, display, or distribute any book or magazine "devoted to the publication, and principally made up of criminal news, police reports, or accounts of criminal deeds or pictures, or stories of deeds of bloodshed lust or crime."*

On March 29,1948, the court agreed with defendant Winters and ruled the New York statute unconstitutional. The majority opinion, delivered by Associate Justice Stanley Forman Reed, stated that the wording of the prohibition was so vague and indefinite that it was impossible for a distributor to know if he was in violation of its provisions.

In the court's opinion, the legitimate use of some stories and pictures might also have been curtailed. The intent of the framers of the statute to prohibit such publications because of the fear they might influence some persons to commit crimes of violence was dismissed by the Justices as having no legal meaning.

The states were reassured, however, that their ability or right to punish the circulation of objectionable publications was not affected, provided "apt words" were used to describe such publications. Similar statutes in 18 states also fell by the decision, and statutes in four other states were jeopardized by the decision.

A variety of reactions followed. On June 28, Lev Gleason Publications filed a suit for injunction against Chicago officials to prevent further interference with the distribution of *Crime Does Not Pay* and to compel them to rescind the prohibition imposed on Oct. 10, 1947.

The suit declared that, with the Winters decision, the Supreme Court had ruled such interference unconstitutional.

Some critics also blamed the Winters decision for the sudden proliferation of crime comics. Legman and Wertham agreed that, before the decision, only 20 comics — one-tenth of the total — dealt with crime. In 1949, Legman placed the number at 120, while Wertham placed it even higher, at more than 200 comics. According to Legman, the Supreme Court's Winters decision proclaimed that "sex in literature is worse than murder."

Confronted with a perceived flood of crime comics and Supreme Court restrictions, concerned officials sought more creative means to control what the United States Conference of Mayors labeled "a headache for city governments." A variety of informal censorship actions were employed to avoid more difficult and less certain legal alternatives. These tactics, often classified as "police censorship" and usually aimed at local distributors, included pleas for cooperation, implicit threats, and harassment.

"A variety of informal censorship actions were employed."

By May 1948, within two months of the March deluge, action had been initiated by four American cities. In Indianapolis, magazine dealers, city officials, and civic organizations acting in concert banned 35 titles. Officials at Centralia, Wash., issued an appeal to publishers "to tone down" their products.

In response to complaints from parents and civic groups, the License and Censor Board of the Detroit Police Department screened the 380 individual titles of an estimated 2.25 million comics available in that city. About 80 titles that contained possible legal violations were submitted to the Wayne County prosecuting attorney's office. This office pronounced 48 of the 80 to be in violation of municipal law, and the distributors, on being informed that, if distribution continued, they would be prosecuted, voluntarily withheld them from circulation, (One title, DC's *Gangbusters*, was restored to the stands after an appeal by that publisher.)

Distributors in Hillsdale, Mich., withdrew the same books judged unacceptable in Detroit. To avoid further censorship, several publishers began to submit advance copies of their comics to Detroit officials for review.

A St. Paul, Minn., druggist, who also served on the city council, organized the first citizens' committee devoted exclusively to the perceived problem of comic books. Under his leadership, a 22-member general committee was formed. It included representatives of the council of churches, the Community Chest's leisure time council, the PTA, Legion of Decency, public and parochial schools, and local comic-book distributors.

After several deliberative sessions, committee members announced the implementation of "'an intensive campaign to educate parents, students, teachers, church leaders, and magazine dealers to select desirable comics only."

A special subcommittee, chaired by Harold D. Eastman, head of the Sociology Department of Macalister College, adopted 12 "standards of evaluation" by which desirable comics were recognized. Among other provisions, comic books judged acceptable by their standards: portrayed home life as stable and permanent and policemen in a respectful manner; did not glorify criminals and their deeds; upheld the principles of democracy and the moral laws of God; and avoided gruesome scenes.

Another special committee, composed of 50 high-school students who represented all the city's high schools, applied the standards to the nearly 400 comic books available in St. Paul. This committee compiled a list of 136 "best buys," comic books that, in their opinion, achieved the standards of subcommittee evaluation.

Finally, the general committee established a speakers' bureau of high-school and college students who lectured at public meetings in an effort to make St. Paul "comic-conscious." Slides and posters of comic violations of committee standards were prepared and the "best buys" list disseminated to churches, schools, civic organizations, and merchants. As a result, many local retailers refused comics not included on the committee listings.

On May 2, 1948, Dr. Jesse L. Murrell, pastor of the First Methodist Church of Covington, Ky., a suburb of Cincinnati, Ohio, delivered a sermon on "Some Perils to the Family." This sermon, presented to mark the beginning of National Family Week, resulted in the most widely publicized and longest lived anti-comic-book citizens' committee.

One of the perils Murrell discussed was comic books. That part of the sermon that dealt with them was printed in local newspapers and broadcast over local radio. Public response was so enthusiastic that the Kenton County, Ky., Protestant Association established a committee to study the feasibility of action against objectionable comics.

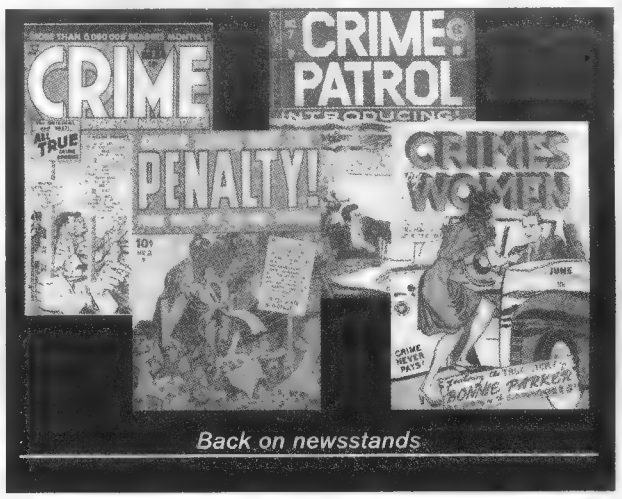
In turn, it issued an invitation to all organizations concerned with youth in the Cincinnati area to send representatives to its May 25 meeting. This meeting included delegates from such Cincinnati and Covington groups and institutions as the University of Cincinnati, Xavier University, the YMCA and YWCA, libraries, public and parochial schools, and juvenile courts and representatives of the Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant faiths.

A subcommittee was appointed to seek information about action initiated against comics by other municipalities, and its members weighed the remedies adopted by Indianapolis, Detroit, Hillsdale, and Centralia.

Initially, the committee attempted to cooperate with publishers and distributors to "improve" the content of comic books but it quickly decided its efforts had no effect. Finally, the subcommittee selected the already proven method in operation in St. Paul.

Dr. Murrell was chosen to head the Greater Cincinnati Committee on Evaluation of Comic Books. Their intent, they insisted, was to educate the public, not to practice censorship. ✦

Next week: *Comics would be graded — not for their condition, but for their content.*



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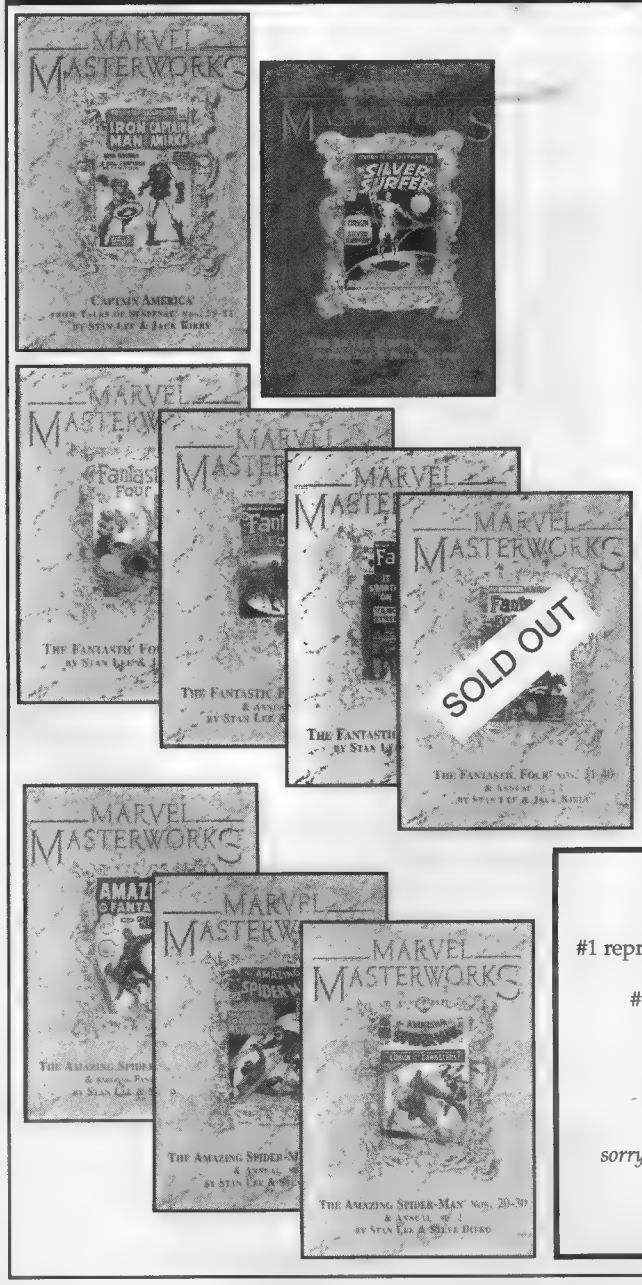

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RetroView

By **Jim Johnson**

CRISIS ON INFINITE EARTHS

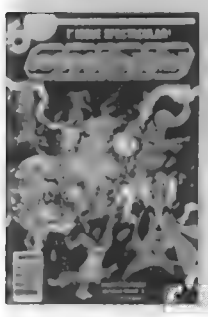
DC editors bestowed four-color godhood upon Marv Wolfman, when they OK'd his proposal to revamp the company's incomprehensible 50-year history in the early 1980s. And, like an angry deity come judgment day, Wolfman waved his hand and wiped countless redundant universes from existence, making the DC universe a more accessible place for new readers.

Of course, fandom would have settled for no one other than George Pérez to illustrate such an epic, and Pérez superceded all expectations by turning in one of the finest efforts of his career.

#1 "The Summoning" • 32 pp.

Apr 1985
W: Marv Wolfman
P: George Pérez
C: Pérez
I: Dick Giordano

Harbinger gathers heroes from Earths 1 and 2, as an anti-matter wave destroys other realities, including Earth 3 and its Crime Syndicate.



Wolfman wastes no time getting started, beginning the culling of the multiverse on the second page. With the ironically heroic demise of Earth-3's Crime Syndicate immediately thereafter, Wolfman also kicks off the first of many emotionally intense and beautifully constructed death sequences.

It's a bit unfortunate that the remainder of the issue is little more than exposition for the rest of the series, but riding along while various heroes and villains from different Earths and eras are brought together is, nonetheless, a fanboy's delight.

Best CGC copy: 9.8 — **Then 75¢ Now $5**

#2 "Time and Time Again!" • 25 pp.

May 1985
W: Marv Wolfman
P: George Pérez
C: Pérez
I: Dick Giordano

The Monitor dispatches several heroes to protect his anti-matter inhibitor machines in several time periods.

It's another fairly slow issue, action-wise. But that's barely noticed amid the excitement generated from the intermingling of such characters from different Earths and time periods as Kamandi and Earth-2's Superman, for example.

Amazingly, among the dozens of characters utilized (so far), Wolfman still manages to squeeze in panel time for individual characters, like The Flash and Psycho Pirate, who eventually play important roles. And, as if that weren't enough, he jams a few intriguing plot developments into an already-packed issue. Astonishing.

Best CGC copy: 9.8 — **Then 75¢ Now $4**

#3 "Oblivion upon Us" • 25 pp.

Jun 1985
C: Pérez
W: Marv Wolfman
P: George Pérez
I: Dick Giordano

More realities die, as the heroes battle the unseen nemesis' shadow creatures. A few heroes also pass away, including The Losers.

It would be easy to criticize the fact that all Wolfman does here is fill another issue with unlikely, ragtag alliances plopped into random time periods.

Except it's just too doggone cool not to like, and this is what we all paid 75¢ to see, after all.

This is fun, plain and simple. But it's obvious none are having as much fun as Wolfman and Pérez themselves, who are making the most out of the limited playtime allotted to them in comicdom's biggest sandbox.

Best CGC copies: 9.8 — **Then 75¢ Now $3**

#4 "And Thus Shall the World Die!" • 25 pp.

Jul 1985
C: Pérez
W: Marv Wolfman
P: George Pérez
I: Mike DeCarlo

A possessed Harbinger slays The Monitor, and all remaining worlds appear to die, even as The Monitor's original plan was close to saving them.

Not to worry. It *is* a 12-issue series, remember?

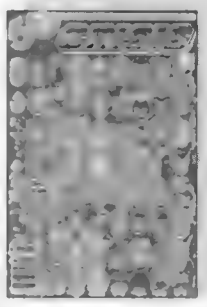
Recognizing the need for a breather, Wolfman shifts from the razzle-dazzle of the previous issues' mix 'n' match team-ups to the relatively quiet introduction of new characters. Although neither the new Doctor Light nor Lady Quark made any kind of long-term impression on the DC universe, their importance to this story helped keep it from becoming nothing more than a year-long slugfest. Not that there would have been anything wrong with that, of course . .

Best CGC copy: 9.8 — **Then 75¢ Now $3**

#5 "Worlds in Limbo" • 25 pp.

Aug 1985
C: Pérez
W: Marv Wolfman
P: George Pérez
I: Jerry Ordway

Two Earths remain, but their survival is threatened, as they begin to merge. The merge points contain time anomalies leading to strange meetings.



No longer content with just sampling characters from the DC universe, Wolfman brings aboard just about every significant player of the day and manages to cram them all into one scene, no less. Hundreds of worlds have been destroyed, and the focus now narrows to a mere handful of dimensions and a paltry few hundred characters.

The villain behind the Crisis is finally revealed, and he also calls himself The Monitor; fancy that. Future references wisely referred to him as — what else? The Anti-Monitor.

Best CGC copy: 9.8 — **Then 75¢ Now $3**

#6 "3 Earths! 3 Deaths!" • 25 pp.

Sep 1985
C: Pérez
W: Marv Wolfman
P: George Pérez
I: Jerry Ordway

Earths 4, S, and X are saved by Harbinger but begin to merge with the imperiled Earths 1 and 2.

Who says all the action has to belong to the "main" Earths? Wolfman turns the wow-factor up yet another notch by bringing the former Charlton, Fawcett, and Quality heroes into the conflict.

As with all renovations, half the work is cleaning house first. With this issue, Wolfman has done just that.

It's been a multiversal rollercoaster ride so far, and, with the surviving worlds and heroes now gathered, it's clear that the best is yet to come. And it does.

Best CGC copies: 9.8 — **Then 75¢ Now $3**

#7 "Beyond the Silent Night" • 42 pp.

Oct 1985
C: Pérez
W: Marv Wolfman
P: George Pérez
I: Jerry Ordway, Dick Giordano

The heroes save the five remaining Earths, but the battle costs Supergirl her life and shows the new Dr. Light what true heroism is.

The grandest and most heart-wrenching issue so far. Having helplessly watched countless worlds die, the heroes finally get to go on the offensive in the most epic and grandiose battle yet. If Pérez' instantly classic cover didn't foreshadow the outcome, word of mouth among fandom certainly did. But, for all its lack of surprise, Kara's death has no less an emotional impact.

Speaking of the cover, Pérez took some heat for a rather, er, uncanny similarity to John Byrne's *Uncanny X-Men* #136 cover from five years earlier.

Best CGC copy: 9.8 — **Then $1.25 Now $5**

#8 "A Flash of the Lightning!" • 25 pp.

Dec 1985
C: Pérez
W: Marv Wolfman
P: George Pérez
I: Jerry Ordway

The Flash sacrifices himself to destroy the Anti-Monitor's new weapon in the anti-matter universe of Qward. His earlier ghostly appearances in the series are finally explained.

A month prior, no one would have thought Wolfman could top Supergirl's heroic death, but with this issue he does just that. Only this time, it is one of the DC universe's founding fathers who bravely gives his life for that very same universe.

And, seniority notwithstanding, his death is all the more tragic because he dies alone, not among his allies, as Kara did, and therefore his sacrifice goes unknown, at least initially. To this day, this remains probably one of the best-written death scenes in comics.

Best CGC copies: 9.8 — **Then 75¢ Now $5**

#9 "War Zone" • 25 pp.

Dec 1985
C: Pérez
W: Marv Wolfman
P: George Pérez
I: Jerry Ordway

Brainiac and Luthor coordinate a super-villain takeover of the remaining Earths using nearly every super-villain from those other Earths

With the surviving worlds momentarily out of danger, Wolfman takes a break from bumping off major characters and focuses on many of the previously neglected super-villains of the DC universe. Actually, it's not so much a break as it is a detour, for this villainous coup has nothing to do with the events of past issues; it's just about bad guys doing that bad-guy thing.

But one has to forgive Wolfman for his fanboyish diversionary indulgence, because, well, it's a really, really fun issue to read.

Best CGC copies: 9.8 — **Then 75¢ Now $4**

#10 "Death at the Dawn of Time!" • 26 pp.

Jan 1986
C: Pérez
W: Marv Wolfman
P: George Pérez
I: Jerry Ordway

Heroes and villains unite to go back in time to stop the creation of the anti-matter universe. The Spectre and The Anti-Monitor tussle.

Oddly enough, Wolfman aborts the villains' multi-world takeover as unexpectedly as it began, and it's mildly disappointing, because it's suddenly truncated rather than truly resolved. This would have been a neat idea to revisit, were the entire multiverse not seemingly destroyed at the end of this issue.

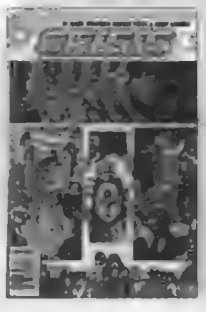
In fact, that destruction was originally intended to be the end of the series, leaving the DC universe wide open for future revamps, but Wolfman was ultimately given two more issues to give this series a true conclusion and tie up the many loose ends in a more fitting fashion.

Best CGC copies: 9.8 — **Then 75¢ Now $4**

#11 "Aftermath" • 25 pp.

Feb 1986
C: Pérez
W: Marv Wolfman
P: George Pérez
I: Jerry Ordway

The multiverse is now a single universe, and the remaining heroes cope with their sudden "non-existence."



As Doc Brown would say, one has to think fourth-dimensionally to understand what's just happened.

Or one could just pay close attention to Wolfman's explanation, which actually makes sense, considering that hundreds of universes have been retroactively wiped from existence.

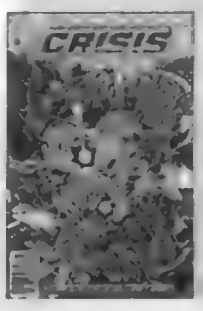
Which is different from being destroyed, according to Wolfman. When criticized for writing the deaths of hundreds of billions, Marv said that, technically, these universes didn't die; they never existed in the first place. So the first 50 years of continuity could now classify as Elseworlds stories!

Best CGC copy: 9.8 — **Then 75¢ Now $4**

#12 "Final Crisis" • 42 pp.

Mar 1986
C: Pérez
W: Marv Wolfman
P: George Pérez
I: Jerry Ordway

Many heroes perish while battling The Anti-Monitor, but the original Superman defeats him for good



The multiverse problem has been fixed, so Wolfman basically uses this issue as a lengthy denouement to address the fates of the now-redundant Earth-2 heroes.

But Wolfman appropriately gives special treatment to the Golden Age Superman, in an incredibly heroic battle in which, for once, the hero doesn't lose his life but is, instead, given a blissful retirement.

Wolfman did exactly what he intended: He left the DC universe a much cleaner, simpler place. Unfortunately, it didn't take long for it to become mucked-up again.

Best CGC copy: 9.8 — **Then $1.25 Now $5**

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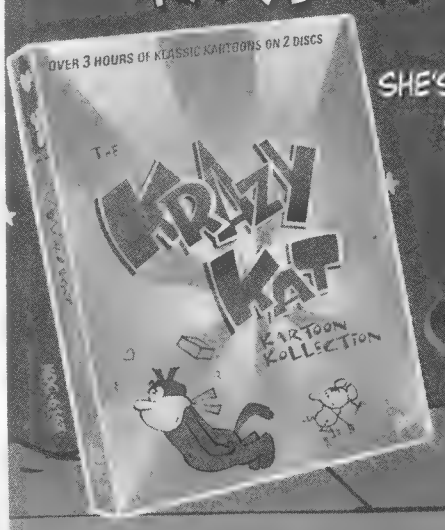

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Revelations that make readers go, "Wow!"

There are more retroactive changes in the four-color universe

Some days this is the best job in the world. The first comments on the recent EYKIW columns ("Everything You Know Is Wrong" stories, a discussion that began in #1563) are just coming in, which leads to a cornucopia of commentary on a smorgasbord of subjects. Ahhh. Fanboy paradise.

First up is ***Gary Scott Beatty*** *of* ***Graphic Magics Studios*** *(www.comicartistsdirect.com):*

I'm looking forward to your discussions of EYKIW comic-book writing. It has to be the hardest way to write: bringing clues together from decades of continuity — clues the original writers didn't even know they were leaving — and coming up with a revelation that will make readers go, "Wow!" The column will have to have the largest ***Spoiler Warning*** in the history of ***CBG***.

My first EYKIW example is from *Avengers Annual* #2 (1968). It's the most beat-up comic book I own, taped together and long ago missing its cover. In the continued story from *Avengers* #56 ("Death Be Not Proud!"), our heroes met and defeated The Scarlet Centurion, a time-traveling baddie who pit Earth's heroes against each other. Writer Roy Thomas informed us, through that great expositor The Watcher, that The Centurion used to be the Pharaoh Rama-Tut and will return under the name of Kang the Conqueror. As far as I know, that was the first time Stan Lee's time-travelers Rama-Tut and Kang were revealed to be the same person. The plot of "... And Time, the Rushing River" had holes you could throw Cap's shield through but was emotional, interesting, filled with heroes and villains, and action-packed.

A WISE CHOICE, ARCHER... BUT ONE THAT COMES TOO LATE!
FOR, NOW THAT YOU ARE NO LONGE OF USE TO ME, I SHALL DESTROY YOU...
NOR CAN ANY FEEBLE ACTION ON YOUR PART PREVENT ME FROM DOING WHAT I WILL!
HE SOUNDS ...SO SURE...SO CONFIDENT!
DON'T LET HIM BUFFALO YOU, CREW!
WE'VE GOT TO FIGHT HIM--NO MATTER HOW GREAT HIS POWER!
BRAVELY SPOKEN, CAP... WE'LL STAND OR FALL AS AVENGERS!

The Scarlet Centurion first menaced The Avengers in* Avengers Annual *#2.

So much has been said about Neil Gaiman's writing ability we forget he is firmly wedged in our fanboy world. His nod to Jack Kirby's Sandman in *Sandman* #12 (Jan 90) pulled The King's DC stories together with his own dream world, when he introduced Kirby's Spandexed Sandman as a real man, caught in a part of The Dreaming, fighting nightmares just as Kirby described. Except the two sidekicks, Brut and Glob, were really in charge. They'd hidden inside a kid's mind (Jed, the kid from the '70s series) with the man and his wife, trying to build their own Dreaming. It's a real hoot to re-read the Kirby DC *Sandman* comics from this perspective. The first guy Brut and Glob tried, Sandman II Garrett Sanford, cracked up. Maybe someone can explain to me how Hector Hall (Silver Scarab), who died in this story, and his wife Lyta (Hippolyta) "got better."

Speaking of Gaiman, what about that great expansion of the DC horror hosts Cain and Abel from *House of Mystery* and *House of Secrets*? And that touching one-shot story about Urania Blackwell, the female Metamorpho, in *Sandman* #20 (Oct 90)? (Shakespeare my #@%&, this guy reads comics!)

Even when I don't necessarily like an EYKIW, I sometimes have to admit that, if it works, it's pretty clever. John Ostrander, in his oddly thoughtful and eerie run on *Spectre* (#1-62) negated the previous series, making the supporting characters spirit constructs by Madame Xanadu. The problem is, I *like* the post-*Crisis* Doug Moench issues with James Corrigan, a private eye surrounded by interesting characters. I must admit, though, the Ostrander issue with Corrigan chased around by a beast bearing the heads of those characters, mouths wide with sharp fangs, including his Moench-generated love interest Kimmie, packed a punch.

Even more EYKIW came later in the series, when Ostrander established that Eclipso was the Wrath of God before God created The Spectre. It was Eclipso that brought the flood that only Noah's ark survived. But pride and an inability to control his anger forced God to bring him down. "He overreached himself ... Unyielding in his anger — in his pride — Eclipso was banished into a prison ..." That prison was the jewel. I like the parallels between Eclipso and Satan's fall and the fact that God thought The Spectre would be a more controllable Wrath of God. We've all seen the mayhem The Spectre can create — he destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah and plagued the Pharaoh in Moses' Egypt. Eclipso was worse? Cool.

Since we're on The Spectre, what about the EYKIW of having Hal Jordan take over? Please, throw no rotten tomatoes, hear me out. Say you're an editor faced with the biggest Mopee of all time, the senseless storyline of Hal going nuts and postal. There's no way you can pull a character out of that quagmire, but fans still like the guy, even though he's dead. So you hire comics' most spiritual writer, J. M. DeMatteis, to do a story about redemption. You make Hal The Spectre. Apparently, a fan came up with that idea. Flipping brilliant.

Dear Captain ...

By **Andrew Smith**

The Captain *replies:*

Wow, Gary, what a terrific letter! Where to begin? The beginning, I guess ...

"I'm looking forward to your discussions of EYKIW comic-book writing. It has to be the hardest way to write, bringing clues together from decades of continuity — clues the original writers didn't even know they were leaving — and coming up with a revelation that will make readers go, 'Wow!'"

It *seems* hard, doesn't it? But some writers have a remarkable facility for it. Alan Moore and Neil Gaiman are especially facile. John Byrne has hardly written a character that he hasn't EYKIWed. Kurt Busiek and Mark Waid routinely shock us with head-slapping moments we should have noticed years ago.

Not every EYKIW writer is perfect, of course, and even the best — that would be Moore, for those of you scoring at home — can bruise my tender sensibilities. (His Adam Strange revamp that made the Hero of Two Worlds an oblivious stud mare for a manipulative Sardath and virtual prostitute Alanna, went "Yuch" for me on a number of levels.) And Byrne has certainly stirred his share of controversy, on everything from *Man of Steel*'s resurrection of the Kents to just about everything in *Spider-Man: Chapter One* (now bordering on being a "Mopee," a story that editors, writers, and readers all develop unspoken mutual amnesia about).

But, good or bad, some writers seem to have an ongoing "movie" in the backs of their heads where what "really" happened is an evolving, organic thing. And EYKIWs

John Ostrander explained away much of The Spectre's supporting cast as constructs of Madame Xanadu in his follow-up to the Doug Moench series.

belch forth almost by themselves from guys like Moore, Byrne, and Gaiman, because they've "known" all along what was "really" happening.

Or maybe I'm selling them short. Maybe they're just brilliant. Or maybe, as Gaiman told me in a recent interview, "Stories have structure that guide you."

And, speaking of Gaiman:

"So much has been said about Neil Gaiman's writing ability we forget he is firmly wedged in our fanboy world."

The interview I just referenced was a highlight of my professional life. Gaiman, whose handlers squeezed my interview in between a major newspaper and a network, probably wouldn't even remember speaking to me.

But it was a highlight, because Gaiman was a terrific interview — he was exactly what you'd expect: Urbane. Articulate. Sophisticated. Unfailingly polite.

But there was one time in the interview — and I hope he'll forgive me for saying so — that he appeared to overcome the drudgery of the interview process and actually waxed enthusiastic. He stopped being the epitome of admirable coolness — and was revealed as one of us not-so-cool, comic-book geeks.

I was interviewing him about *Neverwhere* — his BBC mini-series that was recently released on A&E Video — and kicking around his novels, screenplays, upcoming movies, various awards (Hugo, Nebula, blah, blah), and I asked him if there was something *he* wanted to talk about.

And there was. And it was a comic book.

I've been on both ends of the interview process, and it is horrible, mind-deadening, soul-killing *work*. It's like an afternoon with snobbish in-laws, where you have to be

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unfailingly well-behaved and mannered (without being a bore), cultured and knowledgeable (without being a pedant), and upbeat and entertaining (without being too eager to please). Oh, and you have to speak at all times in pithy, complete, easy-to-quote sentences.

Gaiman, of course, handled it with aplomb. But he never rose to genuine enthusiasm in my interview until he began talking about *1602* at Marvel. TV shows, novels, movies, the open admiration of men, the delirious desire of women ... oh, yeah, that's all well and good. But the only time he got enthusiastic was when we talked funnybooks.

He *loves* comic books. He wants to do a sequel to *1602*. He wants to do *Neverwhere* as a comic book.

Again, I hope Gaiman doesn't take offense at this characterization. Because it's meant with warmth — I was vastly charmed. He may be a lionized literary savant, and I just a common ink-stained wretch, but at the end of the day he and I have something in common: We both love comic books. That makes him more human to me — and allows me to hold my head a little higher the next time somebody makes a sneering remark about Superman at work.

Thanks, Neil. (He told me to call him Neil. Probably because I kept mispronouncing his surname. But, hey, what a guy!)

You also spoke well of Ostrander's run on *Spectre*, Gary, and we are certainly on the same page there. When the series was announced, I thought it was the most daunting writer's misery imaginable. How do you challenge a character who is the Right Hand of God? How do you handle the religious aspects without alienating *everybody*? And how do you deal with The Ghostly Guardian's post-*Crisis* history of having been around since the Dawn of Time — without having fixed everything already?

I shouldn't have worried. Ostrander's EYKIW of The Poltergeist Policeman treated problems as opportunities and addressed every potential landmine with spot-on precision. No matter what your religious persuasion, Ostrander treated you right — and made sense of the character at the same time. An amazing feat, and one that looks all the more impressive with the passage of time.

As to Hal Jordan as The Spectre ... well, why not? A clever idea (albeit a revamp, not an EYKIW), and one that has served the character's fans well.

I haven't space to address your question about how Lyta and Hector "got better" in Gaiman's terrific Sandman EYKIW — but I bet someone in The Legion would love to address it.

While waiting for that explanation, next is this note from ***Richard Howell****, mastermind and Grand High Poo-Bah of* ***Claypool Comics****, and penciller of the second* ***Vision and Scarlet Witch*** *mini-series (1985-86):*

Over the past weekend, I read your EYKIW column and found that I had another viewpoint to impart about the whole Magneto-Scarlet Witch-Quicksilver business. (Who would have guessed that I'd have an opinion about matters Wanda?) Here it is:

You wrote that, in establishing that Wanda and Pietro were the natural children of Magneto, "nothing of value was invalidated."

If I were Roy Thomas (I'm not, relax), I might dispute that on the basis of that deservedly legendary writer's intention to establish that The Avengers were in many distinct ways the descendants of The All-Winners Squad, Marvel's first super-group (as would have been more indisputably the case, if Wanda and Pietro had remained the children of All-Winners' Miss America and the Whizzer); however, I'm not Roy, and my objection to the Magneto connection was a bit more prosaic. At the time this story occurred, there were no clear examples of first- and second-generation mutation in the Marvel universe, so it was assumed that all of those who embraced, suffered under, *etc.*, the classification "mutant" were, in fact, real mutants.

Then, the idea was circulated and established that Wanda and Pietro were to be revealed as the children of Magneto. The whole calculation has resonance, I can't deny that, but here's the problem: It creates a divergence — a schism, if you will — between the real meaning of mutation, in real-world science, and the way the term is used now and forevermore in the Marvel universe. That's right: By establishing that Magneto and his two former indentured servants were parent and children, it became established that mutants, in the Marvel universe, do not breed true — and in real, real-world science, unless a mutation breeds true, it's not a mutation; the subject is something called a "sport," a one-time, one-generation anomaly whose difference, whose mutation, does not establish a clear enough or a strong enough change in the subject's genetic pattern to be carried over into the next generation. Mutants breed true; sports do not. It's as clear and consistent as ontology recapitulating Phil Collins songs.

So that's the real loss of the whole Magneto and his *kinder* throughline: It changes the meaning of "mutation" in the Marvel universe, probably forever. Maybe the opportunities for future family drama — some of which I've drawn myself — is worthwhile in recompense, but, as for nothing of value being invalidated ... well, I find that observation highly challengeable.

The Captain *replies:*

I want every troll on every message board to read this letter three times. Not only is its obvious eye to the big picture what makes Howell a good writer, but its thoughtfulness and respectfulness *in the act of disagreeing* makes his comments both welcome and persuasive.

Hopefully, I can rise to respond in like manner. Like begets like.

And, like you, Richard, I see the potential for the Magnus-Pietro-Wanda revelation to unravel a scientific underpinning of the Marvel universe. I don't disagree with your analysis. But I saw a *worse* one with the Whizzer-Miss America explanation.

I may be misunderstanding the meaning of the word "mutant" — and I welcome correction — but a mutant is "an animal or plant that exhibits inheritable characteristics that differ from its parents" (Webster's). In that sense, Quicksilver is, indeed, a mutant — his father, Magneto, did not have super-speed, so Pietro's powers were an anomaly not shared by his parents. He would be a mutant, as his father was before him. That Magneto's powers did not breed true is troubling, but both Magnus and Pietro are inarguably mutants — just ones that occurred in the same family, with different mutations. Troubling, as I said, but not unknown in the Marvel universe. (Witness Pietro's child having no super-powers at all or all of Scott Summers's pseudo-children having Jean Grey's powers but not his.)

However, Bob "Whizzer" Frank *was* a super-speedster — so, if his son was Pietro, Quicksilver would *not* be a mutant. He would simply be breeding true. Nor was Bob Frank a mutant — his powers were the result of DNA change after birth. He would be a "mutate," if my science is correct. That would mean that neither Bob nor Pietro were mutants, but that Wanda (probably) is. Huh?

The upshot is: I agree with you that Magneto — as a mutant — should have passed on his powers to Pietro and Wanda (as he did, it now appears, to Lorna Dane). If I wanted to be argumentative, I could suggest that Pietro and Scarlet Witch received mixed human-mutant DNA that tried to breed true and only came Mr. Spock-close. But I won't make that argument, since you were suggesting *real* science and that argument is, at best, comic-book science.

But I will repeat my earlier debate point that The Whizzer as Pietro's father has even worse repercussions for Marvel's "mutant" paradigm. And *that* is the "nothing of value" that I was referring to. And I'm glad it's gone.

Whew! Where's a geneticist when we need one?

Comments, Legionnaires? Rebuttal, Mr. Howell? Hey — this is fun! ✦

Andrew Smith, who writes the ***Captain Comics*** *syndicated newspaper column, can be reached at* ***capncomics@aol.com*** *or on his message board,* ***www.captaincomics.us****.*

This has been amusing, little ones!, and that was not something I expected
But every playtime must come to an end
This dream is over.

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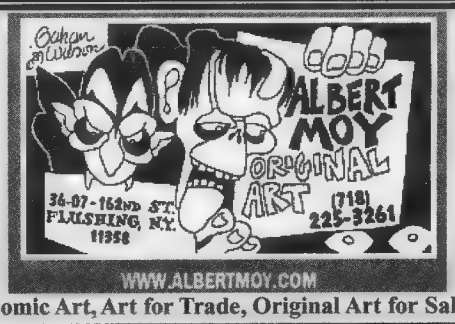

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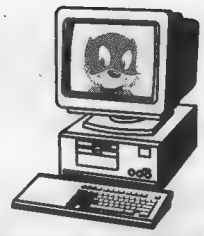
A Manhattan mission to Marvel

Chuck Rozanski made his first trip to New York City in 1979!

Tales from the Database, Page 46



The ways people are buying, selling, and trading classic comic books today!

CGC on eBay

Auctions closed between Oct. 12-18, 2003
All met their reserve price.
Populations reported are as of Aug. 13

***Suspense Comics* #14**
in CGC 4.5 (VG+)
Only copy in grade; there are 2 better including 1 in 7.0.
$11,100

***X-Men* #3**
in CGC 9.4 (NM)
One of 6 copies in grade; there are 3 better including 1 in 9.8.
$5,701

***Two-Fisted Tales* #19**
in CGC 9.6 (NM+)
1 of 2 copies in grade; there is 1 better in 9.8.
$2,500

***Human Torch* #13**
in CGC 9.0 (VF/NM)
Only copy in grade; there are none better.
$2,500

***Detective Picture Stories* #1**
in CGC 5.0 (VG/F)
1 of 2 copies in grade; there are 3 better, including 1 in 6.5
$2,000

***Detective Comics* #54**
in CGC 9.0 (VF/NM)
1 of 2 copies in grade; there are none better.
$1,950

***Detective Comics* #57**
in CGC 9.0 (VF/NM)
1 of 2 copies in grade; there are none better.
$1,797

Original art to Marvel's *G.I. Joe* #21 sells silently

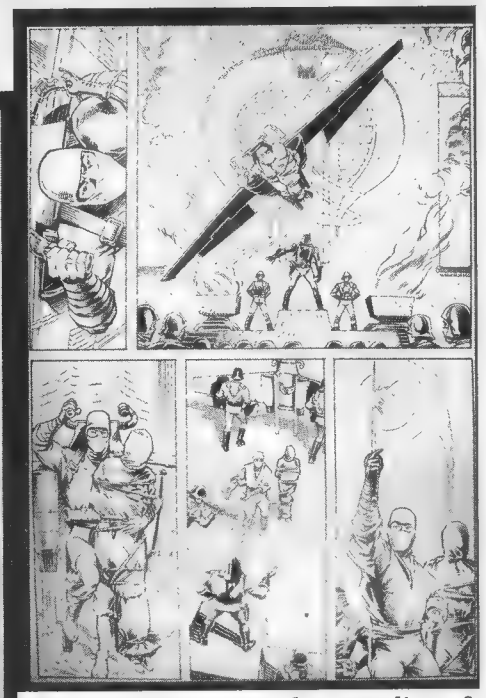
By **Nate Melby**

The original pages from *G.I. Joe: A Real American Hero* #21, the "silent issue" sold to Gene Park, a New York City investment banker for what was only reported as a "healthy five-figure sum."

The sale was handled by Ben Smith of Metropolis Collectibles, who had received the art, along with some early pre-G.I. Joe "Fury Force" concept artwork, from Hama's personal collection on a consignment basis.

"I started collecting comics in the early 1980s and grew up with the Marvel *G.I. Joe* series, of which #21 was by far my favorite," said Park. "I would like to thank Larry, Ben, and the rest of the Metropolis Collectibles crew for allowing me the opportunity to purchase, and entrusting me as the custodian of, this landmark piece of comic book history."

Ben Smith and Gene Park pose with the original pages.



In 1984, Larry Hama and Marvel Comics wrote an issue of *G.I. Joe* with no words as a homage to Jim Steranko's wordless opening sequence to 1968's *Nick Fury: Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D.* #1. A tribute to that *G.I. Joe* issue was recently published by Image ✦

Arizona store acquires massive Marvel hoard

By **Nate Melby**

Award-winning retailer All About Books and Comics of Phoenix, Ariz., recently acquired a nearly complete Silver and Bronze Age Marvel comic-book collection ranging from 1962 to 1975.

"Just when you think every great comics collection has already surfaced in the collectibles market, something like this happens to prove that nostalgic treasures still exist," said All About Books and Comics Owner Alan Giroux, who received the Will Eisner Spirit of Comics Retailing Award this summer.

In this original owner collection, the majority of the comics can be considered in high grade Giroux said. "There are plenty of VF copies with high gloss covers. These books have been sitting in the same storage area for nearly 40 years."

The collection includes: *Amazing Spider-Man* #5-125, *Avengers* #1-100, *Captain America* #100-150, *Daredevil* #1-100, *Fantastic Four* #30-90, *Incredible Hulk* #102-150, *Iron Man* #1-50, *X-Men* #1-60, *Tales of Suspense* #40-99, and *Tales to Astonish* #38-101

Duplicate issues of late Silver Age titles like *Sub-Mariner* (Vol. 2), *Nick Fury, Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D.*, and *Captain Marvel* are also in the collection.

Giroux added, "There are three copies of *Iron Man* #1. The lavender luster to these covers is the best I've seen in more than 20 years of being a retailer."

Giroux has already planned two sales events for All About Comics' regular customers in November. "We've had a lot of in store buzz as we grade, bag, and board these gems", he said. "We suspect that with the stock market still flat, collectibles like these won't last long!"

Anyone interested can contact Giroux at (602) 277-0757, 5060 N. Central, Phoenix, AZ 85021 or e-mail him at *alan@allaboutcomics.com*. ✦

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EYE ON eBay

Oct. 12-18, 2003 CGC auctions

by **Darryl Buchanan**

The top auction this week was for a copy of *Fantastic Four* #12 in 9.4 (NM) condition. The book, offered by Metropolis Collectibles, received a top bid of $18,800 but failed to meet reserve! The bid of $18,800 is the highest bid on any issue of *Fantastic Four* in the last year and a half. A copy of *Fantastic Four* #5 in 9.2 condition offered earlier this year was a distant second at $10,166. A copy of the first issue of this series should have brought the highest price, but a quick check of the database shows that the highest condition unrestored copy of #1 offered in the last year and a half was a 7.5 copy that went for $8,101 back in March. All the higher condition #1's have been restored copies and brought much lower prices.

GOLDEN AGE: A copy of *Suspense Comics* #3 in 4.5 (VG+) brought $11,100. There are only seven copies of this issue in the CGC census. This is the first copy of this issue to show up on eBay. The final price is also a record for any issue of this title on eBay.

Next up is a highly sought-after *Batman* #1 in 3.5 (VG-) condition. While bidding activity was heavy on the book it failed to meet reserve at $7,000.

A rare copy of *Adventure Comics* #48 in 8.0 (VF) condition is next on the list. It brought a high bid of $6,601. Only one other copy of this book (in 3.0 condition) has ever been sold on eBay.

SILVER AGE AND NEWER: A copy of *Incredible Hulk* #6 in 9.4 (NM) condition brought a high bid of $6,100. This is the highest condition issue offered on eBay for any of the first six issues of *Incredible Hulk*.

An *X-Men* #3 in 9.4 (NM) condition went for a record $5,701. Bidding was unexpectedly heavy on this copy. The previous record for an unrestored copy of #3 in this condition was $2,800 in an auction a year ago.

IN DEPTH: This week there were 1,397 auctions recorded receiving bids versus 1,465 last week and 1,543 two weeks ago. Total dollar bidding was $221,311 versus $225,504 last week and $289,572 two weeks ago. There were 28 auctions receiving bids of $1,000 or more compared with 39 last week and 28 two weeks ago.

***Darryl Buchanan** can be reached at **dbuchanan@thecomicsheet.com**.*

Noteworthy CGC Closing Prices on eBay (All copies are unrestored)

Issue	Grade	Price
Action Comics #26	3.0	$240
Action Comics #39	7.5	$936
Action Comics #288	9.0	$104
Action Comics #293	9.2	$315
Action Comics #320	9.4	$435
Action Comics #342	9.4	$183
Action Comics #369	9.4	$175
Adventure Comics #32	3.0	$483
Adventure Comics #48	8.0	$6,601
Adventure Comics #80	6.5	$407
Adventure Comics #260	8.5	$751
Air Fighters Comics #2	6.0	$740
All Winners Comics #8	5.0	$601
All-Star Comics #1	1.0	$400
Amazing Spider-Man #2	6.0	$822
Amazing Spider-Man #6	6.0	$332
Amazing Spider-Man #8	4.0	$309
Amazing Spider-Man #9	3.5	$175
Amazing Spider-Man #10	7.5	$350
Amazing Spider-Man #10	6.0	$213
Amazing Spider-Man #12	6.0	$211
Amazing Spider-Man #14	7.5	$966
Amazing Spider-Man #14	7.0	$788
Amazing Spider-Man #15	8.0	$350
Amazing Spider-Man #16	8.0	$300
Amazing Spider-Man #16	7.5	$275
Amazing Spider-Man #17	9.4	$3,050
Amazing Spider-Man #18	6.0	$130
Amazing Spider-Man #19	8.0	$258
Amazing Spider-Man #20	8.5	$300
Amazing Spider-Man #20	6.5	$154
Amazing Spider-Man #21	8.5	$282
Amazing Spider-Man #22	7.5	$141
Amazing Spider-Man #23	9.0	$470
Amazing Spider-Man #23	7.5	$120
Amazing Spider-Man #24	8.5	$240
Amazing Spider-Man #25	8.0	$168
Amazing Spider-Man #28	8.0	$365
Amazing Spider-Man #30	9.2	$375
Amazing Spider-Man #30	9.2	$342
Amazing Spider-Man #30	9.2	$308
Amazing Spider-Man #39	9.0	$317
Amazing Spider-Man #40	8.0	$260
Amazing Spider-Man #40	8.0	$193
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Amazing Spider-Man #129	8.5	$280
Amazing Spider-Man #129	8.0	$263
Amazing Spider-Man #129	8.0	$247
Amazing Spider-Man #136	9.6	$342
Amazing Spider-Man #139	9.6	$282
Amazing Spider-Man #140	9.6	$150
Amazing Spider-Man #176	9.4	$107
Amazing Spider-Man #177	9.6	$108
Amazing Spider-Man #198	9.8	$100
Amazing Spider-Man #300	9.4	$129
Amazing Spider-Man #300	9.4	$110
Amazing Spider-Man #300	9.4	$105
Amazing Spider-Man #300	9.4	$100
Aquaman #47	9.6	$129
Aquaman #52	9.0	$135
Archie's Mechanics #1	4.0	$234
Astonishing Tales #25	9.4	$154
Atom #1	9.0	$985
Atom #18	9.4	$173
Atom #34	9.4	$123
Atom And Hawkman #44	9.2	$125
Atomic Comics #4	8.0	$291
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Avengers #56	9.4	$365
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Daredevil #2	7.5	$399
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Daredevil #8	9.4	$785
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Daredevil #9	9.4	$500
Daredevil #9	9.2	$213
Daredevil #62	9.4	$149
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Detective Comics #40	7.5	$1,025
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Detective Comics #57	9.0	$1,798
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Detective Picture Stories #1	5.0	$2,000
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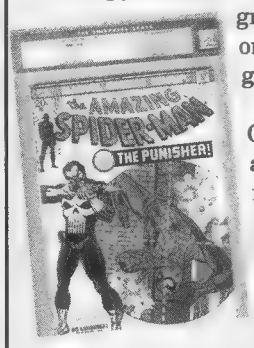
Fantastic Four #41	9.4	$363
Fantastic Four #48	9.2	$1,125
Fantastic Four #48	6.5	$250
Fantastic Four #48	5.0	$140
Fantastic Four #48	4.0	$121
Fantastic Four #92	9.6	$225
Fantastic Four #97	9.6	$162
Fantastic Four #250	9.9	$105
Fantastic Four #500	9.9	$104
Flash #109	6.5	$129
Flash #123	7.5	$576
Flash #138	8.5	$100
Flash #167	9.6	$203
Flash #169	9.0	$100
Ghost Rider Vol. 1 #1	9.4	$338
Ghost Rider Vol. 1 #1	9.2	$208
G.I. Joe (Marvel) #1	9.8	$150
Giant-Size Spider-Man #1	9.6	$330

Amazing Spider-Man #129 sells for $2,449

A copy of *Amazing Spider-Man* #129 (Feb 74) graded 9.6 (NM+) sold for $2,449 on Oct. 12 on eBay. There is one graded better at 9.8 (NM/M).



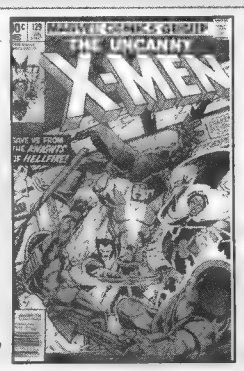
The issue, written by Gerry Conway with art by Gil Kane and Ross Andru, features the first appearance of The Punisher and Jackal. Movie hype is making many Spider-Man comics move on eBay these days.

– Nathan Melby

Retailer Reporter

Compiled by **Brent Frankenhoff**

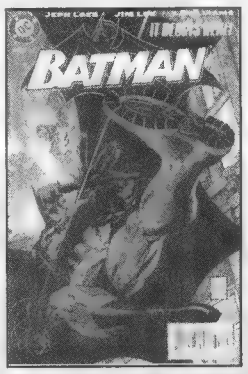
• Fantasy Realms owner and manager James D. Arlemagne of Pittsfield, Mass., reported that he sold a Near Mint copy of *X-Men* #129 for $15. He also noted increased interest in back issues of *Avengers* and *Spider-Man* and decreased interest in many X-Men-related titles.



• Andy Brast, owner of Carry-On Comics, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, sold a Near Mint copy of *Marvel Premiere* #15 for $95 Canadian, a Good+ copy of *Avengers* #4 for $400 Canadian, and a Good copy of *The Brave and The Bold* #34 for $300 Canadian.

"Perfect Mint, ungraded comics from the Silver Age priced at Fine or less" are what he wrote are selling well in his store, while "all non-Mint ungraded Silver Age comics, except key issues" have dropped off in interest recently. He added that back issues of Dells, Gold Keys, and *Classics Illustrated* also had declining interest.

• John Jelley of Pyramid Comics and Games in Sierra Vista, Ariz., sold a Near Mint signed copy of *Batman* #608 for $30.



• R. Roach, owner of Hudmar Ltd., Marlboro, Mass., reported that sales of back issues of *Batman, Flash,* and *Amazing Spider-Man* are increasing, while all Image titles back-issue sales are cooling off.

• Judy Scott, owner of Books, Comics, & Things, Ft. Wayne, Ind., sold a copy of *Ultimate Spider-Man* #1 for $80, a copy of *Action Comics* #242 for $266, an *Action* #252 for $690, and a *Justice League of America* #1 for $450. No grades were provided.

She also noted that while sales of *Batman* and *Spider-Man* back issues "continue to rise," sales of back issues of *Daredevil, Captain America,* and the second *Authority* series are on the decline.

*These reports are compiled from retailers reporting sales to **Comics & Games Retailer**'s Market Beat. To be included in future reports, retailers can fill out the "Aftermarket Reporter" section of the response card inserted into every issue of the magazine.*

EXCLUSIVE CGC PRICE INDEX

For CGC-graded comics auctioned, ***Comics Buyer's Guide*** compared the differences between the **median closing price offered** at each grade and ***The 2003 CBG Checklist & Price Guide*** price for an ungraded NM copy.

COMICS PUBLISHED BEFORE 1990

CGC comics graded **9.9** **"Mint"** ...sold for a median price of **NM+2442%** (or **25.4** times the NM guide price) **in the quarter beginning July 1**
*Sample: **34** (97% of all) 9.9 copies sold on eBay*

CGC comics graded **9.8** **"Near Mint/ Mint"** ...sold for a median price of **NM+900%** (or **10.0** times the NM guide price) **in the quarter beginning July 1**
*Sample: **1,145** (76% of all) 9.8 copies sold on eBay*

CGC comics graded **9.6** **"Near Mint+"** ...sold for a median price of **NM+470%** (or **5.7** times the NM guide price) **in the quarter beginning July 1**
*Sample: **2,228** (76% of all) 9.6 copies sold on eBay*

CGC comics graded **9.4** **"Near Mint"** ...sold for a median price of **NM+295%** (or **3.95** times the NM guide price) **in the quarter beginning July 1**
*Sample: **2,326** (75% of all) 9.4 copies sold on eBay*

CBG's definition: *Barely perceptible wear, tight spine. Some discoloration acceptable in older comics.*

CGC comics graded **9.2** **"Near Mint-"** ...sold for a median price of **NM+130%** (or **2.3** times the NM guide price) **in the quarter beginning July 1**
*Sample: **1,391** (77% of all) 9.2 copies sold on eBay*

CGC comics graded **9.0** **"Very Fine/ Near Mint"** ...sold for a median price of **NM+60%** (or **1.6** times the NM guide price) **in the quarter beginning July 1**
*Sample: **1,103** (75% of all) 9.0 copies sold on eBay*

CGC comics graded **8.5** **"Very Fine+"** ...sold for a median of **NM +10%** (or **1.1** times the NM guide price) **in the quarter beginning July 1**
*Sample: **878** (76% of all) 8.5 copies sold on eBay*

CGC comics graded **8.0** **"Very Fine"** ...sold for a median price of **NM -13%** (or **0.87** times the NM guide price) **in the quarter beginning July 1**
*Sample: **721** (77% of all) 8.0 copies sold on eBay*

CBG's definition: *Slight creases, wrinkles at staples, some loss of gloss. Otherwise a flat, clean issue.*

CGC comics graded **7.5** **"Very Fine-"** ...sold for a median price of **NM -37%** (or **0.63** times the NM guide price) **in the quarter beginning July 1**
*Sample: **477** (75% of all) 7.5 copies sold on eBay*

CGC comics graded **7.0** **"Fine/ Very Fine"** ...sold for a median price of **NM -49%** (or **0.51** times the NM guide price) **in the quarter beginning July 1**
*Sample: **402** (70% of all) 7.0 copies sold on eBay*

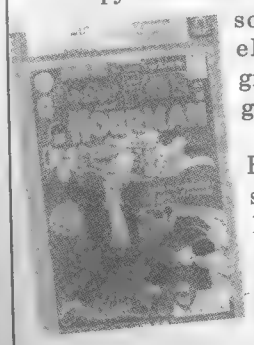
CGC comics graded **6.0** **"Fine"** ...sold for a median price of **NM -67%** (or **0.33** times the NM guide price) **in the quarter beginning July 1**
*Sample: **258** (73% of all) 6.0 copies sold on eBay*

CBG's definition: *Cover worn but clean; no tape or writing. Stress lines, more rounded corners.*

Issue	Grade	Price
Giant-Size X-Men #1	9.0	**$624**
Giant-Size X-Men #1	9.0	**$610**
Giant-Size X-Men #1	8.0	**$380**
Giant-Size X-Men #1	7.5	**$321**
Giant-Size X-Men #1	4.0	**$115**
Green Lama #7	7.5	**$137**
Green Lantern Vol. 2 #34	9.2	**$195**
Green Lantern Vol. 2 #53	9.0	**$106**
Green Lantern Vol. 2 #59	7.5	**$148**
Green Lantern Vol. 2 #71	9.4	**$150**
Green Lantern Vol. 2 #87	9.0	**$153**
Haunt Of Fear #16	9.6	**$710**
Human Torch #13	9.0	**$2,500**
I Dream Of Jeannie #2	9.6	**$305**
Incredible Hulk #6	9.4	**$6,100**
Incredible Hulk #162	9.2	**$138**
Incredible Hulk #180	9.0	**$153**
Incredible Hulk #181	8.5	**$700**
Incredible Hulk #181	7.5	**$400**
Incredible Hulk #181	5.5	**$275**
Incredible Hulk #181	4.5	**$213**
Incredible Hulk Annual #1	9.6	**$811**
Incredible Hulk Annual #1	9.6	**$647**
Iron Fist #14	9.4	**$300**
Iron Fist #14	9.4	**$275**
Iron Fist #14	9.4	**$256**
Iron Fist #14	9.2	**$135**
Iron Man #1	8.5	**$300**
JLA/Avengers #1	9.9	**$100**
Journey Into Mystery #81	8.5	**$315**
Journey Into Mystery #85	4.0	**$160**
Journey Into Mystery #87	9.2	**$1,150**
Journey Into Mystery #94	9.0	**$560**
Journey Into Mystery #111	9.2	**$255**
Journey Into Mystery #112	7.5	**$104**
Journey Into Mystery #120	9.2	**$129**
Journey Into Mystery #123	9.0	**$138**
Kamandi #1	9.6	**$144**
Kamandi #1	9.6	**$124**
Mad #1	3.0	**$456**
Mad #2	8.5	**$869**
Mad #17	8.5	**$233**
Mad #21	9.4	**$560**
Marvel Authentix: Amazing Spider-Man #1	9.8	**$615**
Marvel Collectors' Item Classics #3	9.6	**$256**
Marvel Collectors' Item Classics #4	9.6	**$154**
Marvel Comics #1	0.5	**$5,150**
Marvel Feature #1	9.4	**$324**
Marvel Spotlight #2	9.0	**$159**
Marvel Spotlight #5	7.5	**$104**
Marvel Super-Heroes #12	9.4	**$379**
Marvel Tales Annual #2	9.0	**$100**
Marvel Team-Up #9	9.6	**$118**
Marvel Team-Up #15	9.6	**$100**
Marvel Two-In-One #1	9.2	**$105**
Mystery In Space #75	8.5	**$178**
New Comics #3	3.5	**$405**
New Gods #1	9.6	**$171**
Nick Fury #1	9.4	**$210**
Nick Fury #1	9.4	**$194**
Nick Fury #1	9.0	**$113**
Nick Fury #1	7.5	**$203**
Nick Fury #15	9.6	**$454**
Not Brand Echh #1	9.4	**$147**
Our Army At War #248	9.8	**$121**
Peter Parker: Spider-Man (DF) #1	9.8	**$100**
Phantom Lady #15	6.5	**$510**
Phantom Lady #19	6.5	**$710**
Planet Comics #10	8.0	**$1,275**
Punch Comics #10	9.0	**$443**
Rawhide Kid #15	9.4	**$225**
Sandman (Variant) #8	9.6	**$223**
Shanna The She-Devil #1	9.6	**$203**
Showcase #2	7.5	**$405**
Showcase #13	5.5	**$646**
Showcase #14	6.5	**$887**
Showcase #19	5.0	**$221**
Showcase #36	8.5	**$315**
Showcase #55	9.4	**$1,100**

Showcase #55 closes at $1,100

A copy of *Showcase* #55 (Apr 65) graded 9.4 (NM) sold for $1,100 on Oct. 12 on eBay. There are three copies graded better with the highest graded 9.8 (NM/M).



The issue, written by Gardner Fox with art by Murphy Anderson, retells the origin of Doctor Fate and features an appearance by fellow JSA member Hourman in the story "Solomon Grundy Goes on a Rampage."

– Nathan Melby

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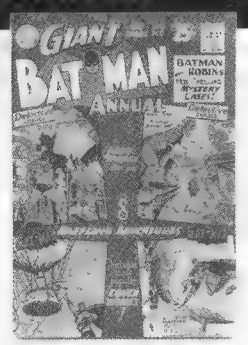

- **Sample collector rates:** $3,000 for $14, $10,000 for $38, $25,000 for $95, $50,000 for $190, $100,000 for $278, $200,000 for $418. Above $200,000, rate is $1.40 per $1,000.
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Issue	Grade	Price
Showcase #58	9.2	$103
Showcase #73	9.0	$126
Showcase #75	9.2	$105
Silver Surfer #1	9.2	$510
Silver Surfer #1	6.0	$123
Silver Surfer #2	9.2	$227
Silver Surfer #2	9.0	$180
Silver Surfer #2	9.0	$178
Silver Surfer #3	9.2	$240
Silver Surfer #3	8.5	$128
Silver Surfer #4	8.0	$250
Silver Surfer #6	9.4	$282
Silver Surfer #7	9.0	$111
Soulfire Beginnings (Michael Turner's) #1	9.8	$130
Space Action #3	7.5	$250
Spider-Man (Gold UPC) #1	9.8	$300
Spider-Man (Platinum) #1	9.2	$120
Spider-Man/Daredevil (Sketch)(DF) #1	9.6	$100
Startling Terror Tales #11	9.2	$2,500
Strange Adventures #5	8.5	$605
Strange Tales #97	6.5	$249
Strange Tales #102	7.5	$158
Strange Tales #167	9.4	$257
Sub-Mariner #1	9.4	$305
Sub-Mariner Comics #42	5.0	$171
Superboy #84	9.2	$109
Superman #196	9.4	$281
Superman's Pal Jimmy Olsen #88	9.4	$153
Super-Mystery Comics #1	4.0	$347
Superworld Comics #2	6.0	$202
Superworld Comics #3	4.5	$101
Suspense Comics #3	4.5	$11,100
Suspense Comics #10	7.0	$650
Swamp Thing #1	9.2	$135
Swamp Thing #5	9.6	$114
Sword Of Sorcery #1	9.8	$128
Tales From The Crypt #33	9.6	$1,025
Tales From The Crypt #46	9.4	$1,525
Tales Of Suspense #17	7.5	$165
Tales Of Suspense #24	7.5	$173
Tales Of Suspense #33	8.5	$327
Tales Of Suspense #38	8.5	$141
Tales Of Suspense #39	6.5	$1,150
Tales Of Suspense #39	3.0	$426
Tales Of Suspense #40	5.5	$217
Tales Of Suspense #48	9.4	$1,401
Tales Of Suspense #63	8.5	$140
Tales To Astonish #51	9.2	$170
Tales To Astonish #51	9.0	$113
Tales To Astonish #65	9.0	$100
Teen Titans #8	9.4	$159
Thor #132	9.4	$108
Thor #146	9.4	$115
Tomb Of Dracula #1	9.0	$123
Tomb Raider #1	9.9	$151
Two-Fisted Tales #19	9.6	$2,500
Ultimate Spider-Man #1	9.6	$203
Ultimate Spider-Man #1	9.6	$184
Ultimate Spider-Man #1	9.6	$168
Ultimate Spider-Man #1	9.4	$155
Ultimate Spider-Man (DF) #19	9.4	$190
Ultimate Spider-Man (DF) #19	9.4	$128
Ultimate Spider-Man (White Variant) #1	9.6	$480
Ultimate Spider-Man (White Variant) #1	9.4	$330
Ultimate Spider-Man (White Variant) #1	8.0	$301
Ultimate Spider-Man #2	9.8	$248
Ultimate Spider-Man #2	9.8	$114
Ultimate Spider-Man #3	9.8	$300
Ultimate Spider-Man #4	9.8	$180
Ultimate Spider-Man #4	9.8	$178
Ultimate Spider-Man #5	9.6	$148
Ultimate Spider-Man #6	9.8	$177
Ultimate Spider-Man #31	9.9	$100
Ultimate Spider-Man #45	9.9	$120
Ultimate X-Men #1	9.8	$134
Uncanny X-Men #1	1.5	$275
Uncanny X-Men #2	7.5	$850
Uncanny X-Men #3	9.4	$5,701
Uncanny X-Men #6	6.0	$113
Uncanny X-Men #14	7.5	$128
Uncanny X-Men #14	7.5	$123
Uncanny X-Men #15	7.5	$108
Uncanny X-Men #16	9.0	$250
Uncanny X-Men #28	8.5	$142
Uncanny X-Men #72	9.6	$203
Uncanny X-Men #94	9.0	$368
Uncanny X-Men #94	7.5	$237
Uncanny X-Men #94	7.5	$228
Uncanny X-Men #94	7.0	$200
Uncanny X-Men #94	7.0	$153
Uncanny X-Men #94	5.0	$109
Uncanny X-Men #98	9.4	$180
Uncanny X-Men #106	9.4	$115
Uncanny X-Men #139	9.6	$125
Uncle Scrooge #8	8.0	$119
Vault Of Horror #14	6.0	$173
Vault Of Horror #35	9.2	$916
Walt Disney's Comics And Stories #37	5.0	$129
Werewolf By Night #3	9.6	$104
Wolverine Limited Series #1	9.8	$103
World's Finest Comics #13	5.0	$249
X-Factor #6	9.8	$150
Zoot Comics #15	6.0	$120
Zorro #15	9.6	$265

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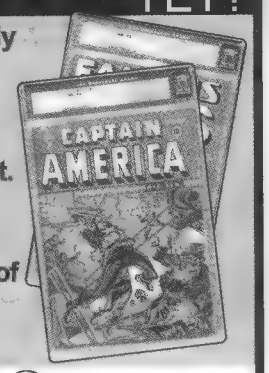

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SPIDERMAN COMICS	22	VG+	$80	SPIDERMAN COMICS	77	VF/VF+	$56
SPIDERMAN COMICS	24	VG+/FN	$69	SPIDERMAN COMICS	81	VF/NM	$75
SPIDERMAN COMICS	25	VG	$66	SPIDERMAN COMICS	82	VF+	$75
SPIDERMAN COMICS	26	VG+	$88	SPIDERMAN COMICS	86	VF+	$54
SPIDERMAN COMICS	27	VG	$68	SPIDERMAN COMICS	87	VF+	$75
SPIDERMAN COMICS	29	FN	$66	SPIDERMAN COMICS	89	VF/VF+	$56
SPIDERMAN COMICS	30	FN	$66	SPIDERMAN COMICS	90	VF+	$76
SPIDERMAN COMICS	35	FN/FN+	$89	SPIDERMAN COMICS	94	VF/NM	$149
SPIDERMAN COMICS	36	VG+	$55	SPIDERMAN COMICS	97	VF	$97
SPIDERMAN COMICS	37	VF/NM	$352	SPIDERMAN COMICS	118	VF+	$59
SPIDERMAN COMICS	38	FN+/VF	$149	SPIDERMAN COMICS	124	VF/NM	$88
SPIDERMAN COMICS	43	FN+	$68	SPIDERMAN COMICS	134	VF/NM	$69
SPIDERMAN COMICS	45	VF/NM	$199	SPIDERMAN COMICS	135	VF+	$85
SPIDERMAN COMICS	47	FN/FN+	$56	SPIDERMAN COMICS	136	VF/NM	$88
SPIDERMAN COMICS	48	VF	$99	SPIDERMAN COMICS	137	VF/NM	$88
SPIDERMAN COMICS	49	FN+[STN]	$68	SPIDERMAN COMICS	142	NM	$89
SPIDERMAN COMICS	51	VF	$173	SPIDERMAN COMICS	149	VF/NM	$88
SPIDERMAN COMICS	53	VF/NM	$149	SPIDERMAN COMICS	238	VF	$53
SPIDERMAN COMICS	54	VF[F/BC]	$67	SPIDERMAN COMICS	239	VF/NM	$66
SPIDERMAN COMICS	57	VF	$79	SPIDERMAN COMICS ANNUAL	II	VG+	$190
SPIDERMAN COMICS	59	VF/VF+	$99	SPIDERMAN COMICS ANNUAL	2	FN-	$98
SPIDERMAN COMICS	60	VF	$79	SPIDERMAN COMICS ANNUAL	3	VF-	$99
SPIDERMAN COMICS	61	VF	$59	SPIDERMAN COMICS ANNUAL	4	VF/VF+	$129
SPIDERMAN COMICS	62	VF	$89	SPIDERMAN[AMAZING FANTASY]	15	G+/g[ST]	$2,292
SPIDERMAN COMICS	64	VF/NM	$119	SPIDERMAN GIANT SIZE	1	VF/NM	$88
SPIDERMAN COMICS	65	VF	$67	SPIDERMAN GIANT SIZE	4	VF/NM	$139
SPIDERMAN COMICS	66	VF	$59	SPIDERMAN VS WOLVERINE	1	VF/NM	$88

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7 VGF	@190.00	18 VF++	770.00	ADVENTURE			216	NM	50.00	386	NM+	52.00	190	NM	57.00				
CLUE				414	NM	38.00	236		48.00	389	NM-	59.00	191	NM	45.00				
1/6 GD-	25.00	33 FN	165.00	418.9		38.00	239		48.00	390	NM-	46.00	192.5	NM	56.00				
DETECTIVE		SHIELD W/ZARD		420		38.00	240	NM	48.00	391.3	NM	50.00	197.9	NM	56.00				
40 FRG	@440.00	1 VGF	1,165.00	425	NM	35.00	255	NM+	94.00	394.6		50.00	203	NM-	40.00				
FLASH		AMAZING SPIDERMAN		BEWARE		CREEPER						50.00	204.7	NM	44.00				
9 VGF	770.00	3 VGF	350.00	17	VF+	47.00	5	NM	80.00	401.3		50.00	208.7	NM	50.00				
14 GVG-	320.00	4 VF++	1,235.00	18	NM-	67.00	BRAVE & BOLD			414.6	NM	49.00	210.2	NM	50.00				
21 GVG-	255.00	5 VGF-®	265.00	91	NM	98.00	71	NM	75.00	417	NM+	45.00	GREEN LANTERN						
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JACKPOT		TIP TOP		149			87.00	102	NM	52.00	439	NM-	71.00	78	NM	98.00			
1 VGF-	③ 715.00	48 FN-(10)	85.00	156	NM	28.00	115	NM-	47.00	440.1	NM-	57.00	HAWKMAN						
LIGHTNING		TOP NOTCH		162	NM-	28.00	DC 100 RG SUPER SPEC			442.3	NM	75.00	12	NM	45.00				
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NATIONAL		5 VG-(1)	430.00	55		58.00	327	FVF+	68.00	FANTASTIC FOUR			6-8	NM	85.00				
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		2 FN-(14)	605.00	86	NM	40.00	347	NM	60.00	48	GVG	123.00	11,24	NM	65.00				

①SMALL PIECE TAPE AT STAPLES INSIDE COVER @ VF; ②3 LIGHT STAINS FC; ③ONE SMALL PC TAPE FC; ④CORNERS ROUNDED RIGHT SIDE; ⑤MANY DEFECTS FC w/ PCS. OUT & REPAIRS; ⑥SMALL SPINE CRACK, PC. OUT BC, & OTHER MINOR DEFECTS; ⑦3 CHUNKS OUT (ABOUT 25% 3") EDGES FC + 2 OUT BC @ VF; ⑧TAPE ON SPINE; ⑨LT. BROWNING INSIDE COVER & PAGE EDGES (NOT BRITTLE) @ NM VF; ⑩SPINE CRACK FULL LENGTH @ VF; ⑪2 PAGES OUT MINOR STORIES @ VF+ ⑫ONE PC TAPE REPAIR INSIDE FC; ⑬2 ABRASIONS BC @ NM VF+; ⑭SMALL PC TAPE ON SPINE & RS FC @ VF; ⑮SMALL JAGGED PC. OUT TOP EDGE FC @ VF+; ⑯FC POOR

Marvel Comics

X-Men #107, 108, 111, -137, all are MINT, bought by myself off the rack way back when!!! Any or all of these are yours for one half of the guide!!!

All books in this ad are below half of Overstreet's Guide!! Look them up, then call me!! I will separate any lots!! Call me with any questions!! I've lots more Silver and Bronze comics for sale, CHEAP!!! All of these are from my High School days!! All books are postpaid!!!! Have Fun!!!!!
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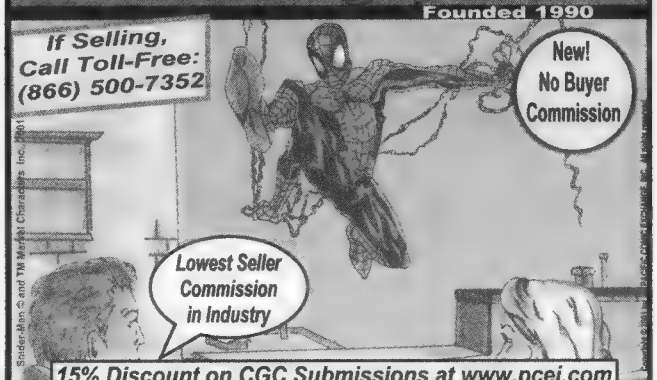
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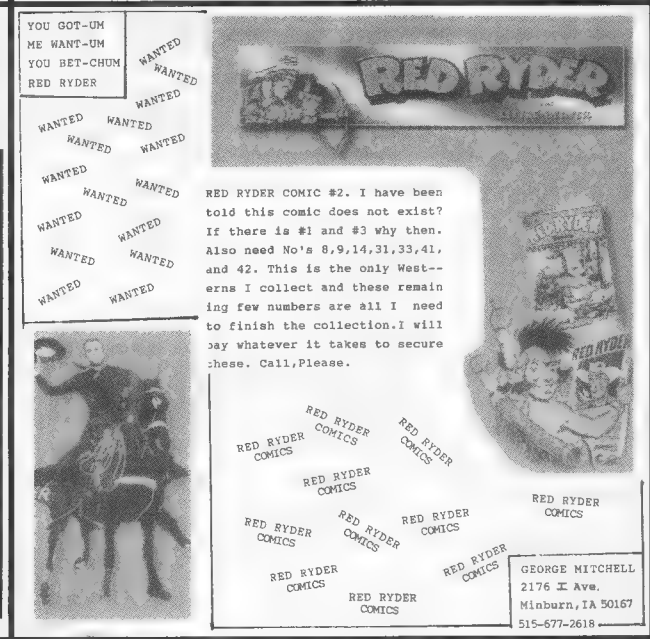
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A memorable trip to Marvel

Traveling to Manhattan in 1979 was an experience for a young man from Colorado

TALES FROM THE DATABASE

By **Chuck Rozanski**

In last week's column, I outlined how the Irjax anti-trust lawsuit of 1979 created an atmosphere of panic amongst the comics publishers. Not only were they being collectively sued for the special deal they had created for Phil Seuling's Seagate Distributing company, but they also found themselves in the awkward situation of having their printing company, Spartan Publishing, as a co-defendent. Clearly, something had to be done to resolve the Irjax lawsuit.

It was at this very moment that my letter lambasting Marvel for Seagate's very restrictive credit terms arrived in the Marvel offices, along with more than 100 letters of support.

Frankly, my timing simply could not have been better. As I gathered from later conversations with folks within Marvel, Marvel Marketing Vice President Ed Shukin was given my letters of support by Robert Maillo.

Shukin then had a meeting with Marvel President Jim Galton, who then told Shukin to try and get me to come to New York. That's why I received the fateful phone call.

Once I made the decision to fly to New York to meet with Shukin (I had no idea I would meet with Jim Galton), I then called my travel agent. The only flight I could afford in those early days of Mile High Comics was a "red eye" which left Denver late in the evening, arriving in New York early the next morning.

At that time, I was 24 years old, and I had never before flown into Manhattan. Even arranging to take a cab to the old Marvel offices was quite an adventure.

Once I finally made it to 575 Madison Ave., I trepidatiously took the elevator to Marvel's floor, and introduced myself to the very skeptical receptionist. Since I had no hotel arranged in advance, I had to sheepishly beg her to hide my battered old suitcase behind her desk before she rang for Shukin. That certainly didn't do much to enhance my image as an important visitor.

*In 1979, Marvel added a third title to its licensed toy tie-ins with **ROM, Space Knight** joining **Micronauts** and **Shogun Warriors**. Here, in a publicity shot from that year, Marvel Comics Group President James Galton (left) and Parker Brothers Vice President Marketing Ronald J. Jackson (right) compare the action figure to the comic book. Unfortunately, Chuck Rozanski wasn't at that meeting.*

While I waited for Shukin to come to the lobby for me, the butterflies in my stomach began to grow to the size of starlings. After all, the letter I had sent Bob Maillo was far from diplomatic. Between exhaustion from flying all night and my fear over what might happen during the meetings, my greatest concern became that I would become violently ill before I could even express some of the points I had repeatedly been covering in my head during my all-night flying adventure.

As things turned out, I simply couldn't have been more pleased with my first meeting with Ed Shukin. In 1979, he was graying about the temples which gave him a very distinguished air. While he definitely looked the part of a high-powered corporate executive, he was also a very round person with a warm smile, and a remarkably open attitude. I genuinely liked him from the very first moment we met. As I recall, we talked about the issues I had raised in my letter for a few moments, and he then asked me if I had time (sheesh!) to meet with Marvel's President, Jim Galton. When I stuttered out that I certainly did want to talk with Mr. Galton, Shukin led me down the hall to Galton's office, introduced us, and then went back to his office.

While Ed Shukin was a warm and cuddly kind of guy, Jim Galton was very hard-edged, and all business. This certainly isn't to say that he wasn't genuinely interested in hearing what I had to say. Given that he was in deep trouble over the Irjax lawsuit, he most certainly wanted to hear about any possible solutions to his problem.

As I later found out, if those possible solutions also included a way to screw the Schuster family to the wall, all the better. In this instance, practically anything I had to say would be considered. I do believe, however, that I shocked him when my response to his "Well, what brings you to New York, young man?" query was for me to tell him "Mr. Galton, I've committed my entire life, and all of my assets in the world, to the retailing of comics. Given the trends that I'm currently seeing as a retailer, I have grave doubts as to whether the comics industry is going to survive more than a couple more years. What I really want is for you to convince me that Marvel isn't about to go out of business ..."

To be continued ...

__Chuck Rozanski__, owner of Mile High Comics, the world's largest online comics retailer, can be reached directly at __chuck@milehighcomics.com__. To receive his weekly e-mail newsletter, visit __mile highcomics.com__ and sign the guest book.

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4452 Science Fiction, For Sale
4453 Science Fiction, Wanted
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4601 Reprints, Wanted
4605 Phone Cards, For Sale
4606 Phone Cards, Wanted
4610 Portfolios / Posters, For Sale
4511 Portfolios / Posters, Wanted
4630 Trading Cards, For Sale
4631 Trading Cards, Wanted
4650 Oldtime Radio, For Sale
4651 Oldtime Radio, Wanted
4660 Miscellaneous, For Sale
4661 Miscellaneous, Wanted
4700 Novelties / Toys / Games, For Sale
4701 Novelties / Toys / Games, Wanted
4710 Role - Playing Games
4720 Video Games, For Sale
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4801 Fanzines, Wanted
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Convention Calendar

The most complete listing of comics events anywhere!

To have your event included, fax your listing to Mary McCarville at ***CBG* Con Calendar,** (715) 445-4087. The e-mail is *mccarvillem@krause.com*.

CALIFORNIA

Nov 5 CA, City of Industry. Wed. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 3:30pm-9:30pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Nov 7-9 CA, El Segundo-LAX. Old Time Radio Convention, Hacienda Hotel. 525 N. Sepulveda, SH: Fri. 1pm-10pm, Sat. 9am-10am, Sun. 9am-11:30am, T: 20-8', F: $40., A: $135.-$160. SPERDVAC, Bobb Lynes, PO Box 628, South Pasadena, CA 91031. PH: 877-251-5771.

Nov 8 CA, City of Industry. Sat. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Nov 8-9 CA, Sacramento. Comic Book & Sports Card Show, Sunrise Mall. Sunrise Blvd. at Greenback Ln. (betw. Hwy. 50 & 80), SH: Sat. 10am-9pm, Sun. 11am-6pm,-T: 90, F: $140. for 1, $125. for 3 or more. CA Sports Card Shows, PH: 530-241-4063.

Nov 12 CA, City of Industry. Wed. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 3:30pm-9:30pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Nov 15 CA, City of Industry. Sat. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Nov 19 CA, City of Industry. Wed. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 3:30pm-9:30pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Nov 22 CA, City of Industry. Sat. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Nov 26 CA, City of Industry. Wed. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 3:30pm-9:30pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Nov 28-30 CA, Dixon-Sacramento. Comic Book & Sports Card Show, Dixon Fairgrounds. Hwy. 113 S off I-80 at cattlemen's, SH: Fri. 4pm-9pm, Sat. 10am-6pm, Sun. 10am-5pm, T: 90, F: $150. for 1, $135. for 3 or more, A: $5. daily, $10. 3-day pass, under 12 free. CA Sports Card Shows, PH: 530-241-4063.

Nov 29 CA, City of Industry. Sat. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Dec 3 CA, City of Industry. Wed. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 3:30pm-9:30pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Dec 6 CA, City of Industry. Sat. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Dec 10 CA, City of Industry. Wed. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 3:30pm-9:30pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Dec 12 CA, San Francisco. Comic Books & Collectibles Show with Jerry Rice & Orlando Cepeda, Cow Palace. Ken Wacker, PH: 707-318-6168.

Dec 13 CA, City of Industry. Sat. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Dec 14 CA, Sacramento. Comic Book & Collectible Show, Scottish Rite Ctr. 6151 H St., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 80-6' & 8', F: $50.-$60., A: $4. Dan Houck, 6278 Gloria Dr., Sacramento, CA 95831. PH: 916-395-1107.

Dec 17 CA, City of Industry. Wed. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 3:30pm-9:30pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Dec 20 CA, City of Industry. Sat. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Dec 24 CA, City of Industry. Wed. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 3:30pm-9:30pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Dec 27 CA, City of Industry. Sat. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Dec 31 CA, City of Industry. Wed. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 3:30pm-9:30pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

CONNECTICUT

Nov 21-23 CT, Meriden. Collectorfest, Westfield Shoppingtown. I-691 exit 6, T: 60, SH: mall hours, A: free. Linda Thimell, 169 Elm St., Enfield, CT 06082. PH: 860-749-8702.

Nov 28-30 CT, Trumbull. Comic Book Show, Westfield Shoppingtown. Merritt Pkwy. Rt. 15, exit 48, SH: mall hours, T: 40, F: $180., A: free. Mike Riccio Sports LLC, Mike Riccio, PO Box 162, Botsford, CT 06404. PH: 203-364-1209.

Nov 30 CT, East Hartford. Comic Convention, Elks Hall. 148 Roberts St., SH: 11am-5pm, F: $50., A: .99. The Bookie, Hal Kinney, 155 Burnside Ave., East Hartford, CT 06108. PH: 860-289-1208 (afternoons).

Dec 28 CT, East Hartford. Comic Convention, Elks Hall. 148 Roberts St., SH: 11am-5pm, F: $50., A: .99. The Bookie, Hal Kinney, 155 Burnside Ave., East Hartford, CT 06108. PH: 860-289-1208 (afternoons).

DELAWARE

Dec 28 DE, Newark. Sports Card, Comic Book & Collectible Show, Aetna Fire Hall. Rt. 273, SH: 10am-3pm, A: $2., 12 & under free. A to Z Promos., Bob Harper, 822 Trophy Way, Bear, DE 19701. PH: 302-438-0967.

FLORIDA

Nov 8-9 FL, Plantation. SCREAMFEST, Comic Book, Rock N Roll & Toy Conv., Holiday Inn. 1711 N. University Dr. PH: 954-583-7633.

Nov 9 FL, Tampa. Comic Book & Toy Convention, Doubletree Hotel Tampa Westshore. 4500 W. Cypress St., SH: 10am-5pm, T: 80, F: $60., A: $3., ages 10 & under free. Tim Gordon, PH: 727-522-9032.

Nov 30 FL, Orlando. Collectible Show, Radisson Barcello Hotel. 8444 International Dr., SH: 10am-5pm, A: free. CCC Promos., PH: 954-579-7398.

Dec 6 FL, Jacksonville. Collectibles Show, Holiday Inn. 9150 Bay Meadows Rd., SH: 10am-5pm, T: 50, A: $5. Charles Cerrito, PH: 954-579-7398.

Dec 14 FL, Daytona Beach. Comic Book Conv., Ramada Inn Speedway. 1798 W. Int'l. Speedway Blvd., SH: 10am-4pm, A: free. Alan, PH: 309-657-1599.

Dec 21 FL, Orlando. Collectible Show, Radisson Barcello Hotel. 8444 International Dr., SH: 10am-5pm, A: free. CCC Promos., PH: 954-579-7398.

Dec 27-28 FL, Fort Lauderdale. Holiday Convention, Pompano Beach Civic Ctr. 1801 NE 6th St., SH: 10am-5pm, T: 100, A: $6., $10. 2-day pass. Charles Cerrito, PH: 954-579-7398.

Jan 10-11 FL, Orlando. 15th Annual FX Extravaganza Collectible Toy & Comic Book Show, Orange Cty. Convention Ctr. 9800 International Dr., T: 1,100. Marz Prod. Inc., PH: 941-360-6666.

GEORGIA

Nov 16 GA, Atlanta. Comic Convention, Marriott Hotel-Century Ctr. I-85 exit 91, Clairmont Rd., SH: 11am-5pm, T: 66-6', F: $250., A: $4. Wesley Tillander, PO Box 1251, Hogansville, GA 30230. PH: 706-837-4976.

ILLINOIS

Nov 9 IL, Gurnee. Comic Book Convention, Holiday Inn. 6161 W. Grand Ave., SH: 10am-3pm, A: $2. Jim, PH: 847-336-9963.

Nov 16 IL, Orland Park. Sports Cards & More Show, Civic Center. 147th St., 1 blk. W. La Grange Rd., SH: 9am-2pm, T: 80-6', F: $33., A: $1. John Leary, 9522 W. Shore Dr., Oak Lawn, IL 60453. PH: 708-423-1758.

Nov 23 IL, Bridgeview. Comic Book, NASCAR & More Show, Oremus Center. 1 blk. W. of Harlem Ave. at 79th St., SH: 9am-2pm, T: 65-8', F: $35., A: $2. John Leary, 9522 W. Shore Dr., Oak Lawn, IL 60453. PH: 708-423-1758.

Nov 28-30 IL, Arlington Heights. Chicago Tardis-40 Years of Doctor Who, Sheraton Chicago Northwest. 3400 W. Euclid Ave., SH: Fri. 9am-9pm, Sat. 9am-11pm, Sun. 9am-5pm, A: $30.-$35. 1 day pass, $50.-$60. 3 day pass. Alien Entertainment, PO Box 2660, Glen Ellyn, IL 60138. PH: 630-790-0905.

Nov 29 IL, Orland Park. Sports Cards & More Show, Civic Center. 147th St., 1 blk. W. La Grange Rd., SH: 9am-2pm, T: 80-6', F: $33., A: $1. John Leary, 9522 W. Shore Dr., Oak Lawn, IL 60453. PH: 708-423-1758.

Dec 13 IL, Orland Park. Sports Cards & More Show, Civic Center. 147th St., 1 blk. W. La Grange Rd., SH: 9am-2pm, T: 80-6', F: $33., A: $1. John Leary, 9522 W. Shore Dr., Oak Lawn, IL 60453. PH: 708-423-1758.

Dec 14 IL, Bridgeview. Toy Con, Oremus Community Ctr. 7900 S. Oketo Ave., SH: 8:30am-2pm, T: 60, A: $3., 10'& under free. Terry Mannix, PH: 708-237-1645.

Dec 28 IL, Orland Park. Sports Cards & More Show, Civic Center. 147th St., 1 blk. W. La Grange Rd., SH: 9am-2pm, T: 80-6', F: $33., A: $1. John Leary, 9522 W. Shore Dr., Oak Lawn, IL 60453. PH: 708-423-1758.

INDIANA

Nov 8-9 IN, Elkhart. Sports Card & Collectible Conv., Pierre Moran Mall. 154 W. Hively Ave., SH: Sat. 10am-6pm, Sun. 12noon-5pm, T: 45-8', A: free. Dave Brody, PO Box 724, South Bend, IN 46624. PH: 219-272-9198 or Ken Gaipa, PH: 219-389-9962.

Nov 9 IN, Indianapolis. Comic Book & Toy Show, Holiday Inn East. 6990 E. 21st St., SH: 9:30am-3:30pm, T: 65-6', F: $70. for 1, $140. for 3, A: $4. Ash Comics & Shows, Andy Holzman, 1947 Bechtel Rd., Indianapolis, IN 46260. PH: 317-334-0173 or 824-9602.

Nov 21-23 IN, Indianapolis. Gamefest, State Fairgrounds. 1202 E. 38th St. Advantage Conv. Serv., PO Box 1128, Antwerp, OH 45813. PH: 419-258-1780, FAX: 419-258-1870.

IOWA

Dec 6 IA, Council Bluffs. Comic Book Convention, Best Western Crossroads. 2216 27th Ave., SH: 10am-4pm, A: free. Alan, PH: 309-657-1599.

Dec 7 IA, Des Moines. Comic Book Conv., Holiday Inn. 5000 Merle Hay Rd. SH: 10am-4pm, A: free. Alan, PH: 309-657-1599.

KANSAS

Nov 15-16 KS, Shawnee. ComiCon, Civic Centre. 11837 Johnson Dr., SH: Sat. 10am-5pm, Sun. 10am-4pm, T: 70-6', F: $125.-$150, A: $5., under 7 free. PH: 816-924-1566.

Dec 27 KS, Shawnee. Comic Book Convention, Hampton Inn. I-435 at Midland Dr. exit, SH: 10am-4pm, A: free. Ken, PH: 913-764-8888.

MARYLAND

Nov 6-9 MD, Hanover. Toys, Comic Books, Diecast & Sports Card Show, Arundel Mills Mall. Stackhouse Events, Pat Stackhouse, 625 8th Ave., Prospect Park, PA 19076. PH: 302-345-7208 or 610-461-1830.

MASSACHUSETTS

Nov 16 MA, South Attleboro. Comic Book, Toys, Non-Sports Card & Collectable Show, Knights of Columbus. 304 Highland Ave., Rt. 123, SH: 10am-3pm, T: 59, A: $3., under 16 free. Harry Martin, 936 South St., Wrentham, MA 02093. PH: 508-384-8491.

Nov 22-23 MA, Framingham. Boston Super Megafest, Sheraton Hotel. 1657 Worcester Rd, MA Pike exit 12 K&S Promos., John DiCicco, 57 Bay View Dr., Shrewsbury, MA 01545. PH: 800-505-8697 or 201-261-4982.

Dec 7 MA, Boston. Comic Book & Toy Spectacular, Radisson Hotel. Formerly Howard Johnson 57, 200 Stuart St., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 120-8', F: $95., A: $5. Monkey House Entertainment, David Cummings, PH: 978-388-6576.

MICHIGAN

Nov 8 MI, Livonia. Encore Con, Elks 2246. 31117 Plymouth Rd., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 50, F: $45. in advance, $50. day of show, A: $3., ages 6 & under free. Motor City Conventions, Michael Goldman or Gary Bishop, 19785 W. 12 Mile Rd. PMB 231, Southfield, MI 48076. PH: 248-426-8059.

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Nov 21-23 MI, Livonia. Sports Card, Comic Book, Coin, Collectible Show, Livonia Mall. 7 Mile & Middlebelt, SH: Fri. & Sat. 10am-9pm, Sun. 11am-5pm, T: 80, F: $80. for 1, $150. for 2, A: free. Bruce Mugerian Show Promos., PH: 248-788-1178.

Dec 12-13 MI, Livonia. Sports Card, Comic Book, Coin, Collectible Show, Livonia Mall. 7 Mile & Middlebelt, SH: Fri. & Sat. 10am-9pm, Sun. 11am-5pm, T: 80, F: $80. for 1, $150. for 2, A: free. Bruce Mugerian Show Promos., PH: 248-788-1178.

Dec 27 MI, Livonia. Encore Con, Elks 2246. 31117 Plymouth Rd., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 50, F: $45. in advance, $50. day of show, A: $3., ages 6 & under free. Motor City Conventions, Michael Goldman or Gary Bishop, 19785 W. 12 Mile Rd. PMB 231, Southfield, MI 48076. PH: 248-426-8059.

Dec 27-28 MI, Madison Heights. Collectable Comic Book Show, UFCW Union Hall Local 876. 876 Horace Brown Dr., SH: 9am-3pm. Classic Prod., Joseph Pellegrino, PO Box 472, Fraser, MI 48026. PH: 586-775-3289 or 790-6290.

MISSOURI

Nov 14-16 MO, Kansas City. Comic Books & Collectibles Show, Metro North Mall. 400 NW Barry Rd., SH: Fri.-Sat. 10am-9pm, Sun. 12noon-6pm, T: 55-8', F: $100., A: free. D&S Collectibles, Donnie Hall, 3917 Cambridge Crossing Dr., St. Charles, MO 63304. PH: 816-560-8180.

Nov 23 MO, Shrewsbury. Comic Book Show, Memorial Post Hall Unit 111. 7300 Lansdowne, SH: 10:30am-3pm, T: 40, F: $30., A: $2. Anthony Gladish, 4253 Fatima Dr. #3, Saint Louis, MO 63123. PH: 314-544-2812.

Dec 28 MO, Chesterfield. Comic Book Convention, Hampton Inn & Stes. 5 McBride & Son Ctr. Dr., SH: 10am-4pm, A: free. Alan, PH: 309-657-1599.

NEW JERSEY

Nov 9 NJ, Clifton. Comic Book Expo, Recreation Ctr. 1232 Main Ave., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 30-6', F: $50., A: free. J. Paul, 10 Cross St., Montclair, NJ 07042. PH: 973-783-0608.

Nov 15 NJ, Jackson. Comic Book, Memorabilia & Sports Card Show, VFW. SH: 9am-3pm. Shari or Jeff, PH: 732-833-9224.

Nov 22-23 NJ, Bordentown. Comic Book Show, Armory. Rt. 206, SH: 9:30am-3:30pm, T: 50, F: $90., A: $2. RK Promos., Rob or Karen Gomberg, 3 Rachel Ct., Franklin Park, NJ 08823. PH: 732-422-9365 or Mike Leon, PH: 215-396-8016.

Nov 30 NJ, Wayne. Comic Book Expo, Holiday Inn. Rt. 46 Service Rd., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 30-8', F: $60., A: $2. J. Paul, 10 Cross St., Montclair, NJ 07424. PH: 973-783-0608.

Dec 7 NJ, Wayne. Comic Book & Collectibles Show, Co. #1 Firemen's Conv. Ctr. 1 Parish Dr. off Rt. 23 N., Lincoln Park Exit, SH: 8:30am-3pm, T: 80, A: $1, under 12 free. Phil De Mario, PO Box 4094, Wayne, NJ 07474. PH: 973-726-9897.

Dec 14 NJ, Clifton. Comic Book Expo, Recreation Ctr. 1232 Main Ave., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 30-6', F: $50., A: free. J. Paul, 10 Cross St., Montclair, NJ 07042. PH: 973-783-0608.

Dec 28 NJ, Bordentown. Comic Book Show, Armory. Rt. 206 S., SH: 9:30am-3:30pm, T: 50, F: $45., A: $2. RK Promos., Rob or Karen Gomberg, 3 Rachel Ct., Franklin Park, NJ 08823. PH: 732-422-9365 or Mike Leon, PH: 215-396-8016.

Dec 28 NJ, Wayne. Comic Book Expo, Holiday Inn. Rt. 46 Service Rd., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 30-8', F: $60., A: $2. J. Paul, 10 Cross St., Montclair, NJ 07424. PH: 973-783-0608.

Jan 4 NJ, Wayne. Comic Book & Collectibles Show, Co. #1 Firehouse. 1 Parish Dr. off Rt. 23 N., Lincoln Park Exit, SH: 8am-3pm, T: 80, A: $1, under 12 free. Phil De Mario, PO Box 4094, Wayne, NJ 07474. PH: 973-726-9897.

Feb 1 NJ, Wayne. Comic Book & Collectibles Show, Co. #1 Firehouse. 1 Parish Dr. off Rt. 23 N., Lincoln Park Exit, SH: 8am-3pm, T: 80, A: $1, under 12 free. Phil De Mario, PO Box 4094, Wayne, NJ 07474. PH: 973-726-9897.

NEW YORK

Nov 9 NY, Brooklyn. Comic Book & Collectible Show, Golden Gate Inn. Knapp St. & Shore Pkwy., SH: 9am-3pm, A: free. Mark, PH: 718-266-1625.

Nov 16 NY, Rochester. CollectorFest, The Party House. 677 Beahan Rd., SH: 10am-3pm, T: 30-8', F: $40., A: free. Ernie's Cards, Ernest Orlando, 264 Park Ave. Rear Apt., Rochester, NY 14607. PH: 585-241-3198.

Nov 23 NY, Brooklyn. Comic Book & Collectible Show, Golden Gate Inn. Knapp St. & Shore Pkwy., SH: 9am-3pm, A: free. Mark, PH: 718-266-1625.

Nov 28-30 NY, New York City. 5th Annual National Comic Book, Art & Toys Show, Metropolitan Pavilion. 125 W. 18th St., T: 100. PH: 201-569-2011 or FAX: 201-865-3288.

Dec 6 NY, New York City. Collectors Fest Sports Cards, CD's, Records, Tapes, Videos, Mem., Comic Books & More Show, Holy Cross School. 332 W. 43rd St., SH: 10am-5pm, F: $40. for 1, $70. for 2, A: $3. Gary Lyons, PH: 718-972-3872.

Dec 7 NY, Brooklyn. Comic Book & Collectible Show, Golden Gate Inn. Knapp St. & Shore Pkwy., SH: 9am-3pm, A: free. Mark, PH: 718-266-1625.

Dec 21 NY, Brooklyn. Comic Book & Collectible Show, Golden Gate Inn. Knapp St. & Shore Pkwy., SH: 9am-3pm, A: free. Mark, PH: 718-266-1625.

Dec 21 NY, Rochester. CollectorFest, The Party House. 677 Beahan Rd., SH: 10am-3pm, T: 30-8', F: $40., A: free. Ernie's Cards, Ernest Orlando, 264 Park Ave. Rear Apt., Rochester, NY 14607. PH: 585-241-3198.

Jan 4 NY, Melville-Long Island. Collectibles Show. 585 Route 110, SH: 9am-3pm, T: 57, A: free. George Schultheis, PO Box 1654, Seaford, NY 11783. PH: 516-804-0047 or 361-9503.

Jan 24-25 NY, New York City. Big Apple Comic Book, Art & Toys Show, Penn Plaza Pavilion. 401 33rd St. & 7th Ave., SH: Sat. 11am-7pm, Sun. 10am-6pm, A: $8. PH: 201-865-3288.

NORTH CAROLINA

Dec 5-7 NC, Salisbury. Comic Book, Sports Card, Records, Toys, Coins & More Show, Mall. I-85 exit 76, SH: Fri. & Sat. 10am-9pm, Sun. 1pm-6pm, T: 60, F: $60., A: free. Mike Dentino, 849 9th Ave. Pl. NE, Hickory, NC 28601. PH: 828-328-1029.

Dec 7 NC, Raleigh. Comix Con, Clarion Hotel. 4501 Creedmoor Rd., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 23-6', F: $70., A: free. Lyn Anderson, PO Box 99201, Raleigh, NC 27624. PH: 919-844-1758.

OHIO

Nov 29-30 OH, Columbus. Mid-Ohio-Con, Hilton Hotel. Easton Town Ctr., SH: Sat. 10am-6pm, Sun. 10am-5pm, T: 150, A: $15. R.A.P. Promos., Roger Price, PO Box 3831, Mansfield, OH 44907. PH: 419-526-1427.

Jan 4 OH, Cleveland. Comic & Sci-Fi Con, Knight's Party Center. KOC Hall, 29101 Euclid Ave. (.5 mi. E. of I-90 & Exit 186), SH: 10am-3pm, T: 35-8', F: $55., A: $2., 6 & under free. Jeff Harper, 5220 Loma Linda NE, Canton, OH 44714. PH: 330-499-6056.

PENNSYLVANIA

Nov 14-16 PA, Allentown. Toys, Comic Books, Diecast & Sports Card Show, PA Expo Center. Stackhouse Events, Pat Stackhouse, 625 8th Ave., Prospect Park, PA 19076. PH: 302-345-7208 or 610-461-1830.

Dec 6 PA, Allentown. Lehigh Valley Comic Con, Schnecksville Fire Co. 4550 Old Packerhouse Rd., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 60-8', F: $60. for 1st, $50. for 2nd, $40. for 3rd, A: $3., 12 & under free. Lance Hawk, 1290 Vermont Ave., Allentown, PA 18103. PH: 610-797-3357.

Dec 6-7 PA, Pittsburgh. Comic & Toy Convention, Expo Mart at Monroeville Mall. Bus. Rt. 22, Monroeville, Exit 6 PA Tpke., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 450-6', A: $5., $3., under 12. D. Alessandria, 456 Old Farm Ln., Johnstown, PA 15904. PH: 877-967-1500.

Dec 14 PA, Philadelphia. Comic-Con, Stadium Holiday Inn. 10th St. & Packer Ave. (I-95 exit 19 or I-76 exit 350), SH: 10am-4pm, T: 50-6', F: $70. for 1, $135. for 2, A: $3. Derek Woywood, PO Box 313, Clementon, NJ 08021. PH: 856-782-0817.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Nov 15 SC, Columbia. Comic-Con, Super 8 Motel. 773 St. Andrews Rd., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 30-8', A: $2. Heroes & Dragons, 1563B Broad River Rd., Columbia, SC 29210. PH: 803-731-4376 or 772-9198.

Nov 29 SC, Greenville. Comic Book & Sports Card Show, Comfort Inn. I-85 & Mauldin Rd. (exit 46C), SH: 10am-4pm, T: 28, F: $38., A: $1. Rick Fortenberry, PH: 704-424-3453 or Tom Waldrop, PH: 864-244-7424.

TENNESSEE

Nov 8 TN, Johnson City. Comic Book, Toy & Heroclix Con, Holiday Inn. 101 W. Springbrook Dr., SH: 10am-5pm, F: $50. for 1, $120. for 3, A: $2. PH: 423-282-3164 or 232-6711.

Nov 16 TN, Knoxville. Comic Con, Holiday Inn Select. Cedar Bluff Rd., I-40 exit 378, SH: 10am-4pm, T: 40, A: $2. Steve Riley, 2920 Brock Ave., Knoxville, TN 37919. PH: 865-455-8410.

TEXAS

Nov 8-9 TX, Austin. Collectors Expo, Crockett Ctr. 6301 Hwy. 290 E., SH: Sat. 9am-5pm, Sun. 10am-4pm, A: $3. good for both days, under 6 free. Sally Wallace, 6702 Lexington Rd., Austin, TX 78757. PH: 512-454-9882.

Nov 22 TX, San Antonio-Live Oak. Sports Card, Comic Book & Toy Show, Civic Center. Pat Booker Rd., I-35 & Hwy. 1604, SH: 9am-5pm, T: 100-8', F: $40., A: $2., under 13 free. Eckman's Books & Collectibles, Dale E. Eckman, 8050 Pioneer Oak, Converse, TX 78109. PH: 210-945-0003.

Jan 9-10 TX, Austin. TX Superhero & SciFi Collectors Expo, Crockett Ctr. 6301 Hwy. 290, SH: Fri. 12noon-6pm, Sat. 9am-6pm, T: 100, A: $8.50 for 1 day, $12.50 for 2 days. PH: 512-396-2845.

Jan 17 2004 TX, San Antonio-Live Oak. Sports Card, Comic Book & Toy Show, Civic Center. Pat Booker Rd., I-35 & Hwy. 1604, SH: 9am-5pm, T: 100-8', F: $40., A: $2., under 13 free. Eckman's Books & Collectibles, Dale E. Eckman, 8050 Pioneer Oak, Converse, TX 78109. PH: 210-945-0003.

VIRGINIA

Nov 23 VA, Richmond. CRCC Fall Show, Holiday Inn Crossroads. 2000 Staples Mill Rd., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 35, F: $65., A: $2. Chesterfield Comic Collectors, Guy Rose, 6413 Old Bern Rd., Chesterfield, VA 23832. PH: 804-796-4903.

Dec 7 VA, Tysons Corner-McLean. CapiCons.com Comic Book, Sports Card & Toy Show, Westpark Hotel. 8401 Westpark Dr., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 80-6', F: $95. for 1st, $90. for 2nd, $85. ea. add'l., A: $3., under 5 free. Jeff Rocen, 906 S. Kenwood Ave., Baltimore, MD 21224. PH: 703-912-1993 or 800-222-2057.

WASHINGTON

Nov 16 WA, Seattle. ComiCard Convention, Seattle Ctr. NW Rooms. 101 Republican St., SH: 10am-5pm, T: 80-8', F: $85., A: $0. Steve Miner, PO Box 55853, Seattle, WA 98155. PH: 206-365-1207.

WISCONSIN

Nov 23 WI, West Allis. Comic Book Convention, Burnham Bowl. 6016 W. Burnham Ave., SH: 11am-4pm. Clayton Dietl, PH: 414-328-3675.

CANADA

Nov 7-9 ON, Toronto. Comicon, Queen Elizabeth Bldg. Exhibition Pl., SH: Fri. 4pm-9pm, Sat. 10am-7pm, Sun. 10am-5pm. Paradise Comics, PH: 416-487-9807.

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JLA ACT of God #1, Last Avengers Story #2 wanted in NM-M condition. Send information to: John Atwater, 5720 Napa Ct., Alta Loma, CA 91701-1934.

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FANTASTIC FOUR Annual #1 VF $270 ppd; Annual #2 VG $34; Marvel Collectors Item Classics #1-22 most F/VF $9 ea. E-mail: kadesh53@yahoo.com

STRANGE TALES Annual #2 VG+ $65 ppd; Strange Tales #102 F $70; #103, 104, 105 F $48 ea; #106 F- $35. Others. E-mail: kadesh53@yahoo.com

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JOHN WAYNE, Sunset Carson, Andy Devine, Red Ryder, Smiley Burnett, Roy Rogers, Gene Autry Crackojack9 others. Billy Giles, PO Box 271, Keithville, LA 71047. 318-925-6654.

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Who's that girl?

In the 20 or more years she appeared in the comic strip *Dick Tracy*, Moon Maid's actual name was never given.

He got no respect

Pity poor Killer Moth. He was one of the many comics villains adapted to the 1960s *Batman* TV show, but his escapades never made the air. He and his henchmen appeared in the pilot film for *Batgirl*, but the film never aired on the network.

Living dolls

Dick Tracy is likely one of the last comic strips readers might imagine that baby dolls would be merchandised for, but, nonetheless, there were three: all great sellers. The characters Sparkle Plenty, Bonnie Braids, and Honey Moon are sought by collectors.

Believe it or not

Some of the stranger character collectibles include Seven Dwarfs medicine from South America and the English Mickey Mouse Gas Mask. Perhaps the strangest licensed product was Spider-Man and Hulk toilet paper.

Pinball sounds like a great villain

In the 1960s William Dozier did a TV pilot for *Dick Tracy* that was not picked up for a series. However, a collectable toy was produced. It was a toy bagatelle (or pinball) game with likenesses of the actors from the pilot. One of the case went on to stardom, though. Actress Eve Plumb played Bonny Braids and later worked on *The Brady Bunch*.

- Mike Curtis

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Use additional sheets of paper if needed.

Slices of life

Aka, an annotated comics-related weblog

By **Peter David**

Well, I'm extremely pressed for time this week, because I'm madly motoring through the tight-deadlines novelization of *Spider-Man II*. There's no subtitle at this time, which is kind of a shame. I like subtitles in sequels, such as in the *Terminator* films. Makes it seem more literary somehow. Since it features Doctor Octopus, I'd be all for calling it *Spider-Man II: Up in Arms,* but nobody asked me.

In any event, as I occasionally do when my back's against the deadline wall, I'm murdering two fowls with a single rock by presenting selected excerpts from my daily blog at *www.peterdavid.net*. There's a few addendum along the way for *BID* readers.

Dancing Miss Daisy

We just came back from seeing *Six Dance Lessons in Six Weeks*, the new play starring Mark Hamill and Polly Bergen currently in previews on Broadway at the Belasco Theater. Seeing a show in previews, when the kinks are supposed to be worked out, can always be an adventure. In last night's performance, for instance, the sound system was so out of whack that three minutes into the show, the feedback was practically rupturing everyone's eardrums. Bergen suddenly dropped character, announced that this was simply unacceptable and she walked off the stage.

Mark stood there flummoxed for a moment, then turned to the audience and said hopefully, "So ... want to know how a light saber works?"

Twenty minutes later they finally got the sound running properly, earning the gratitude of both cast and audience, and the play started over again.

Fortunately enough, the performance we saw tonight went off without a hitch. Hamill plays a dance instructor hired to come to the home of a baptist minister's wife and, as the title would imply, spend the next six weeks giving her dance lessons. The reason I call it *Dancing Miss Daisy* is that, at its core, it's about an aging Southern woman, disconnected from the world, who finds a way of coping with her environment through the most unlikely of touchstones (her character is actually named Lily, but hey ... Daisy. Lily. Close enough). The characters are engaging, the show is briskly paced, and there's enough unexpected revelations about both protagonists (it's a two-person play) to keep you wondering what's going to be sprung on you next.

What was also classy about Mark was that his throat was getting so strained by the end of the show that the theater personnel had arranged for him to be brought directly to an emergency room afterward to have it treated. Yet despite that, he stopped and signed autographs and posed for pictures with waiting fans.

Support the theater, support Broadway, and support Mark (whose *Comic Book: The Movie* comes out in January on DVD from Miramax.)

New *Captain Marvel* artist

Well, the beans have been spilled about new *Captain Marvel* artist Aaron Lopresti coming aboard as of issue #19. An online news site has the item, along with artwork that has every single fan saying, "Yea! Captain Marvel is back in his old costume!"

What's great is: Every fan who says that is wrong. Mwaahaha. Dance, puppets, dance ...

Cowboy Peter's TV round-up for the week ending Oct. 17 (*Alias, Smallville, West Wing, Angel*)

*(Note for **BID** readers: This is my weekly commentary on the main never-miss shows I watch. The only other blog entries that get more responses is when I say **anything** critical of George W. Bush. Let loose the **Spoiler Warnings**!)*

Alias: Syd's dad bends (OK, breaks) rules to protect his daughter. Very commendable. Very illegal. And you just *know* that he's not going to be able to keep a lid on it forever. Why do I have the feeling that it's going to be Sloane who is somehow going to blow the whistle on him? Or, worse, get wind of it and endeavor to blackmail Jack somehow? Meanwhile it was interesting watching Syd and Vaughn endeavoring to work as a team again with the heightened tension between them. But hey, maybe blowing stuff up is even better than sex. I am so along for the ride for this one.

Smallville: The Kryptonite bullet sequence was harrowing; it's shocking to see Clark that vulnerable and his poor parents freaking out. Interesting that we're now starting to see the beginnings of Lex's megalomania, and where it's coming from is *extremely* disturbing. Consider: What it seems they're saying is that Lex's eventual sense of destiny, dominance, and power-sucking ego stems from the fact that Clark has saved him so many times. Clark is basically creating his own worst enemy simply by doing what comes naturally. In saving him, he's damning him. How stupendously twisted is *that*?

Angel: The second episode nicely reinforces that Angel is the lead of the show as Spike pulls a fast fade while Doctor Phlox, out of his *Enterprise* make-up, betrays a werewolf. OK, kids, here's a tip: *Never* betray a werewolf. It just always ends badly. It took some truly demented writing minds to come up with the notion of a gourmet club that eats supernatural beasts. It's like that movie *The Freshman* by way of *Twin Peaks*. I sure didn't see it coming, so hats off. As for Spike, it's starting to look like the Casper act is only temporary. It'll be interesting to see if the rumors about Spike winding up human (and the first male slayer!) turn out to be right in the end after all.

West Wing: I missed the first few minutes thanks to a VCR snafu. But it's pretty obvious that the show has completely lost its focus since Sorkin left. The characters are unrecognizable as themselves. Literally. I didn't know who any of them were. In fact, it looked like a totally different set of actors. Even the White House didn't look right. I guess the lighting has gotten just that bad. None of the characters sounded remotely right. And there was no intense political infighting or strategies. Instead the whole thing played like a crime show or something. Perhaps it wasn't intended as a back-door pilot or something, but frankly, I just didn't get it at all. Sorkin's absence is sorely felt.

(Note for ***BID*** readers: Well, gotta tell ya, the *West Wing* joke went right past a bunch of folks. See, *West Wing* wasn't on that week. Instead NBC, probably not wanting to go head-to-head with the baseball playoffs, aired a repeat of *Law and Order* instead. So I acted as if I was totally oblivious which, admittedly, isn't much of a stretch. But my readers outdid my act by stating that, yes, I was right, and boy *West Wing* was really crummy this season. Invariably they would make subsequent posts of, "Oh, OK, I get it now." Ah well. As the Joker said, any joke you have to explain ...)

How to save Steve Bartman's life

The Cubs should hire him.

Seriously. Find a job in the organization for him. He's not stupid. Guy's a finance major. Must be something on the business side he can do. Plus he coaches youngsters. Let's keep in mind that he, an amateur, displayed the most often-quoted baseball axiom that even many pros forget: Keep your eye on the ball. He did that. So if The Cubs have a youth club (as many ball organizations do) put him in charge of that.

And just imagine the commercials for next year: "I'm Steve Bartman. As Chicago Cubs associate business manager, I have permanent seats at Wrigley — nine rows back of home plate. I'm nowhere near the front row. *Nothing* can stop us now."

(NOTE: Some folks thought I was kidding. I wasn't. I was dead serious. Personally, I think The Cubs owe him. His "interference" was questionable at best and, let's face it, they were up three games to one. They lost the fifth game all by themselves, no runs were allowed in by his lunge at the ball in the sixth game, and he was nowhere near the park when they blew the seventh game. If they'd gone on to win, he'd have been a footnote and nothing more. Instead this guy's life is permanently tarnished because of The Cubs organization's lousy play. They should make it up to him. And if the Cubs openly "forgive" him, perhaps the rest of Chicago will follow suit.) ✦

***But I Digress** is © 2003 Second Age, Inc. Peter David, writer of stuff, can be written to at P.O. Box 239, Bayport, NY 11705.*

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One-Stop Shopping

The November 2003 *PREVIEWS* has cool stuff that starts shipping in January!

On the front: David Mack returns to **Kabuki** with a ground-breaking new bi-monthly series from Image Comics!

On the back: Writer Darwin Cooke chronicles the heroes of the DC Universe before they were superheroes in **DC: The New Frontier**!

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Plus:

- *Legends of the Goon!* Dark Horse collects the earliest stories to feature Eric Powell's two-fisted zombie-stompin' roustabout in **The Goon: Rough Stuff** trade paperback, presenting classic *Goon* tales in color for the first time!
- *A New Hero From A Wild Storm!* Following the stormy events of *Superman #200*, Metropolis has a new defender: *Mr. Majestic* from the Wildstorm Universe! Follow the exploits of this "Strange New Visitor" in this month's **Action Comics #811**, **Adventures of Superman #624**, and **Superman #201**!
- *Superhero Coffee Break!* Welcome to **Common Grounds**, the premiere hero hangout and coffee-and-donut shop, where true tales of the human side of the superhuman get spilled every month! New writing sensation Troy Hickman is joined by a host of artists – including Dan Jurgens and Michael Avon Oeming – for two stories of heroes and their day-to-day lives! Alternate cover by J. Scott Campbell!
- *Avengers Assemble...Again!* Writer Chuck Austen re-launches the adventures of "Earth's Mightiest Mortals" in **Avengers #77**, featuring a clash with the Wrecking Crew, the resurrection of a forgotten Marvel hero, and the introduction of a **new member** of the *Avengers – all for the introductory cover price of .50¢*! Be sure to check out this month's *Marvel Previews* for all the details!

And:

- Ameri-Manga master Ben Dunn (*Ninja High School*) returns with **Heaven Sent #1**, the first issue of new Antarctic Press shoujo series featuring a young man and his guardian angel who loves him so much, she makes the ultimate sacrifice!
- The Sci Fi Channel hit series comes to Avatar Press's Pulsar imprint in the first issue of **Stargate SG-1: P.O.W. #1**, in which an alien warlord gains control of the SGC, and Colonel Jack O'Neill is stranded on a distant world, face-to-face with a thousand Goa'uld warriors!
- Learn the never-before-revealed origin of the evil COBRA organization and its mysterious leader, Cobra Commander, in the one-shot special, **G.I. Joe: COBRA Reborn**, from writer Paul Jenkins, artist Joe Bennet, and Devil's Due Publishing!
- A drug bust gone sour, a stalled murder investigation, and a major traffic incident spell trouble for the cops of the Farmington District! The hit Emmy- and Golden Globe-Award-winning FX TV series comes to comics in all its edgy, fast-paced glory in **The Shield: Spotlight #1**, from writer Jeff Mariotte and Jean Diaz.
- The Cartoon Network Adult Swim favorite comes to comics in Viz's **Inu Yasha: Visual Manga Volume 1**, featuring actual screen captures of the anime action, collected in graphic novel format!

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